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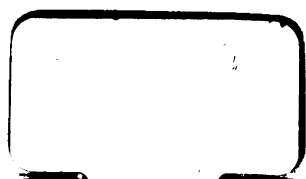
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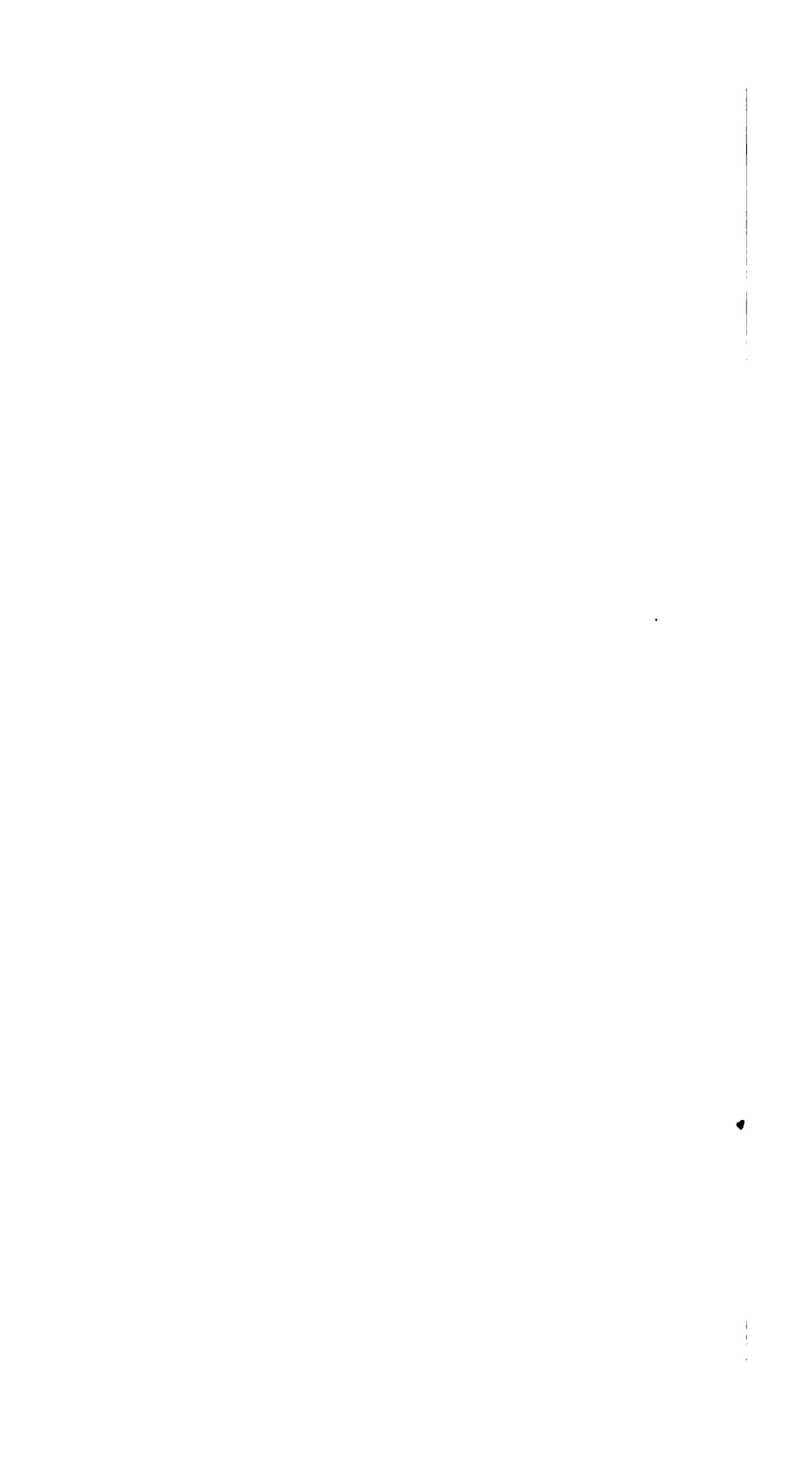


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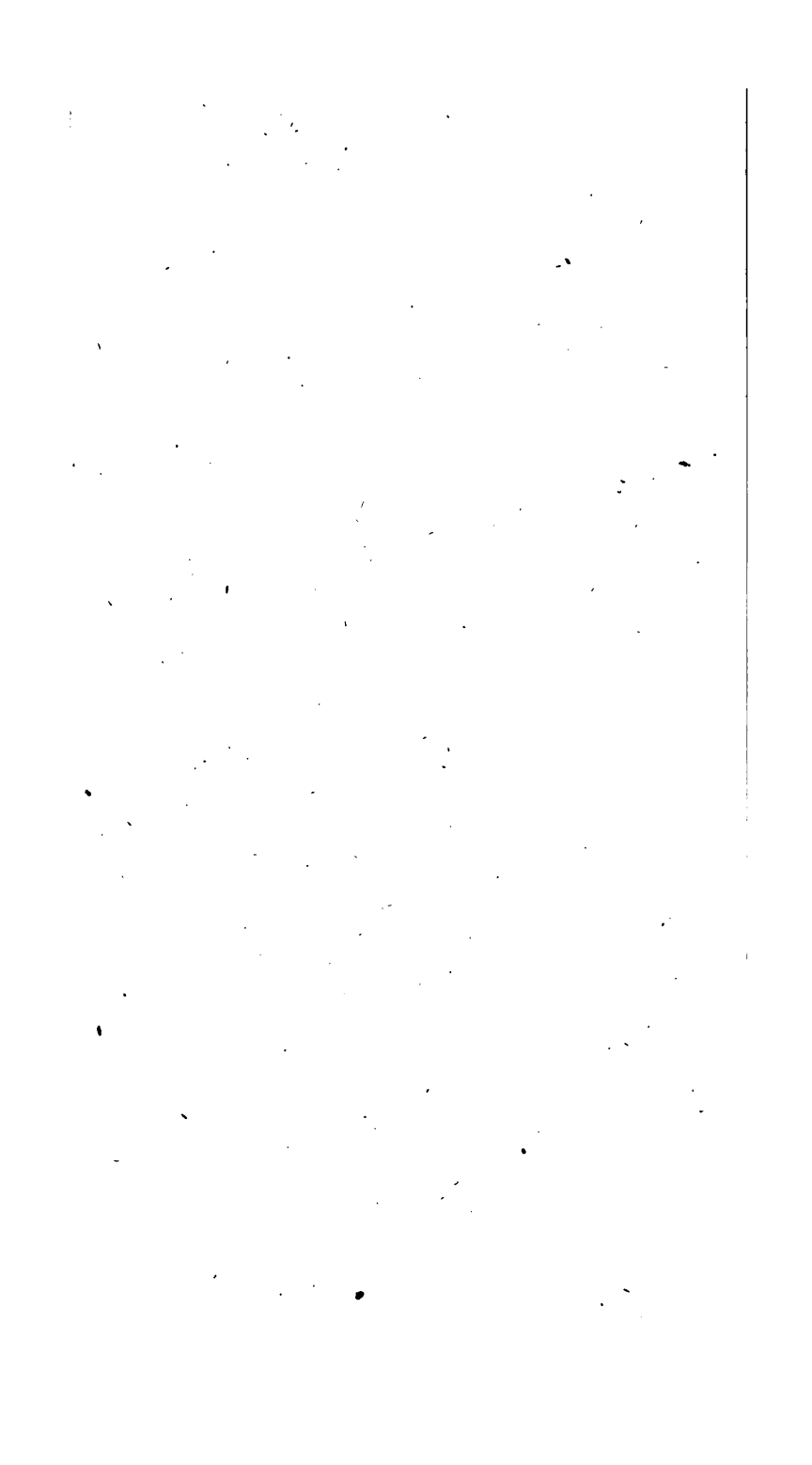






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Dallas





# AUBREY:

A NOVEL.

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By R. C. DALLAS, Esq.

*AUTHOR OF PERCIVAL.*

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Sweet are the uses of Adversity.

SHAKSPERE.

That misery does not make all virtuous, experience too clearly informs us; but it is no less certain that, of what virtue there is, misery produces the far greater part.

JOHNSON.

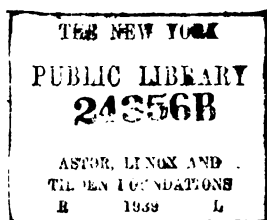
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A U-

# AUBREY.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

*However obscure the Ways of Providence, a sound Mind naturally endeavours to trace them.*

THE conversation of a pure and open-hearted youth, and the arrangement for disposing of his pictures, had drawn off Aubrey's attention from the mortifications he had received: but, scarcely had he parted with Sensitive, when the recollection of them revived his disgust at the world, heated his fancy with images of new insults, and again directed his wishes to Mariton and a country life.

VOL. II.

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He was, however, unwilling to plant stings in the heart of the woman he loved; and he therefore resumed all the cheerfulness he could as he entered his house, met his family with smiles, talked of the hopes he had conceived from his interview with Mr. Flourish, and gave Cæsar directions for the removal of the pictures in the morning.

In spite of his efforts to preserve a gaiety of countenance, he frequently caught himself in a reverie, and he observed a gloom on every face, of which he suspected his own dejection to be the cause. He dined alone with his family; and afterwards had recourse with success to their musical talents to recover his spirits: they played, sung, danced, forgot the world, and were happy.

The next morning the pictures were removed to Mr. Flourish's; and Aubrey spent the forenoon in examining them,  
and

and placing them in the best lights, according to the subjects. In this he followed his own judgment; for both his friend Sensitive and Mr. Flourish were otherwise engaged; and, as for applying to any other connoisseur, Sir Kit Keeping's bread and cheese still stuck in his throat, and prevented him: besides, he was himself sufficiently skilled in light and shade to conduct this work, and he took pleasure in superintending it. When the paintings were all properly disposed, he paraded some time before them, surveying with pride and hope the means that were to suspend the fall of his family; and then returned to Albemarle-street, to dress before dinner, at which he expected company.

At his door he found Cæsar arguing against the importunity of several tradesmen, who were insisting on seeing his master. This was another new situa-



tion: his heart received and ejected the stream of life with violence. He entered the parlour, and desired they would follow him. He expressed his surprise at their impatience; and, at the same time, acknowledging the justness of their demands, said he was sorry to postpone the payment of them, not having by him the sum to which they amounted, but that they might depend upon having their accounts settled shortly. He was requested by one of them to specify the time. "In a week or ten days," said Aubrey; "perhaps it may be a fortnight."—"Why! to be sure, sir," said Mr. Prim the upholsterer, "a fortnight is no time; but I have passed my word to make a large payment by the eighteenth, which is the beginning of the week, and I shall be put to my trumps to do it. I have no objection to a draft on a banker at  
"fourteen

“fourteen days date ; for it will answer  
“my purpose just as well as money.”—  
“I have no objections to the same,”  
was echoed by the other tradesmen.

Aubrey, unaccustomed to putting off demands, and above shuffling, was at first at a loss what to say ; but, trusting to the force of candour, he replied, that it was impossible. “Gentlemen,” said he, “I have at present no banker to draw upon. I see that, aware of the situation into which I have been unexpectedly thrown, you are alarmed for your money : now, be assured, that the injury and unhappiness of non-payment would be infinitely more to me than to you. Feeling this, I am just now returned from transacting some business, by which a fund is to be provided for the settlement of my affairs. I can do nothing more than repeat what I have said ; and, considering

“ the moneys you have formerly received, I think it should satisfy you.” — “ Why ! to be sure,” answered Mr. Prim, who seemed to be the orator of the group, “ you speak like a gentleman, Mr. Aubrey ; and you can’t wonder that, in these times, men in business should look about them : but, as I said before, a fortnight’s no time ; so, for my part, seeing you promise so fairly, I will manage to make up my money some other way.” — “ I have no objections,” said Mr. Pruin the grocer, “ to following Mr. Prim’s example ; for I know Mr. Prim to be a prudent man : but I must say that, though I think Mr. Aubrey is one of the most well-spoken gentlemen I know, it is going too far to our faces to tell us, that if he should not pay, us, he would be the most injured and unhappy person.” — “ Pho !” cried Mr.

Mr. Prim, interrupting him, "how  
" can you, Mr. Pruin, expose such a  
" want of education! Don't you know  
" what sentiment is? It is the way gen-  
" tlemen feel. What Mr. Aubrey said  
" in that regard was only sentiment, not  
" real; only honour, not hard cash."—  
" Oh! I understand now," said Pruin.  
" I beg your pardon, Mr. Aubrey; I  
" have no objection, sir, to wait. I  
" hope Mrs. Aubrey and all your good  
" family are well, sir." The other per-  
sons consented to wait likewise, and  
made similar inquiries; for which he  
thanked them, and they went away.

A scene still more mortifying awaited  
him up stairs. Passing towards his dress-  
ing-room he heard a violent scuffle in  
the apartment which, on the family's  
coming to the house, had been devoted  
to study. He flew to the door, and, as  
he opened it, saw his son Arthur ward a

blow made at him by his tutor, Mr. Williams, and return one that felled him to the ground. " Good Heaven ! " what do I see ! " exclaimed Aubrey ; " what can this mean ? " Arthur stood confounded at seeing his father ; the tutor lay motionless on the floor ; Aubrey endeavoured in vain to raise him. Alarmed lest the blow were fatal, he rang the bell, intending to send for a surgeon ; but, before Cæsar came up, the tutor began to stir. Arthur had struck him on the temple and stunned him, but had done him no greater injury : he soon recovered his senses ; and, being desired by Aubrey to account for the indecent act, to the last part of which he had been a witness, took his hat, and said he should leave his son to account for it. " That I am ready to " do, sir," said Arthur ; " but, with " my father's leave, I shall keep you to " hear

“hear my account.” Saying which, he placed himself before the door, to prevent Williams passing. “Very well, “young man,” cried the enraged tutor: “you not only assault me under your “father’s roof, in despite of every moral “rule, but you make me a prisoner.”— “You shall be no prisoner here,” said Aubrey; “yet give me leave, Mr. “Williams, to express my surprise that “you should avoid taking part in the “explanation the circumstance requires. “If Arthur has been the aggressor, be “assured his being my son will be an “additional motive for my displeasure: “let me know what is the cause of “this.” Williams hung his head and was silent. “The cause,” said Arthur, “is “plainly this: I have lately found him to “be a villain, and was this day provoked “to tell him so.”—“How, Arthur!” cried Aubrey, “what language is this!

“ whatever you might have been led to  
“ think, you did not, I hope, make use  
“ of such a term.”—“ I did not, sir,”  
replied Arthur, “ till he had called you  
“ a beggar ; I then, being provoked be-  
“ yond bearing to hear you so abused,  
“ told him he was a villain ; on which,  
“ trusting to his strength, he aimed a  
“ blow at me, which, had I not par-  
“ ried it, might have killed me ; but,  
“ thanks to the lessons I learned in  
“ the country, my skill outmatched his  
“ force : I was beating him before you  
“ came in, and he must have soon yielded,  
“ even if he had not received the blow  
“ that stunned him.”—“ Beggar ! Mr.  
“ Williams,” said Aubrey, looking with  
conscious dignity at the tutor, who at  
length raised his head, and, re-assuming  
the look of philosophical consequence,  
of which his drubbing had deprived him,  
began an oration, which he addressed to  
Aubrey :

Aubrey : " To take any notice of your  
" son's scurrility, Mr. Aubrey," said he,  
" would be to degrade the prerogative  
" of reason. I shall only say, that, not-  
" withstanding your restriction of my in-  
" structions to the classics, I have  
" thought it a duty superior to all others  
" to instil into his mind just notions of  
" the nature of things. I was but illu-  
" strating the nature of the equality of  
" man, by consequences drawn from  
" your reverse of fortune ; when, as if  
" he had suddenly changed the opinions,  
" he had formed upon the subject, he  
" took pet at me, grew testy, and at  
" last proceeded to insolence and to  
" blows."—" It was not for your opi-  
" nions on the equality of men," said  
Arthur, " which I allow are very just ;  
" but for your brutality, that I treated  
" you as I will every man, high, low,



“or equal, who shall dare to speak a  
“humiliating syllable of my father.”

The horror that began to rise in Aubrey's mind as his son declared his approbation of a levelling principle, was suddenly diverted by the conclusion of his sentence, and gave way to a feeling of the most delightful kind. As he looked at the beautiful, elegant, brave youth, whose auburn hair flowed in disordered ringlets round his countenance, whose dress was discomposed by the combat he had maintained, and whose slim figure formed a striking contrast to the broad, clumsy person of the vanquished tutor, his ear drank the sweet sounds of filial love, his bosom glowed, his brow softened, a smile flew to his lip, and a tear to his eye. He threw himself into Arthur's arms, pressed him to his bosom; and, turning to the miscreant whom his son had chastised, repeated  
with

with a smile : " Beggar ! Mr. Williams, " what think you of my fortune now ? "

Williams made an attempt to leave the room. " Before you go, sir, " continued Aubrey, " is not there an account to be settled between us ? " — " You know very well, " replied Williams, sullenly, " that there is nothing due to me. " — " And is that all ? " said Aubrey ; " is there no balance due to me ? Does your memory refuse to furnish you with the amount ? " Williams was silent. " Then I'll tell you what it is, " proceeded Aubrey ; " my advance to you amounts to fifty pounds ; but go, and never let me see you more ; and, as an additional punishment to that you have already received from my son, I acquit you of the debt. " The tutor looked at Aubrey, then at Arthur, then again at Aubrey, as if he were going to say something ;

thing; but he seemed struck dumb, bit his lips, and walked away.

On his leaving the room, Arthur informed his father that he had lately failed in respect in talking of him; that he had more than once said, that there was nothing he so much enjoyed as the fall of a rich man; and that, in defending his opinion to-day, he had made such ignorant applications to the family as were not to be borne. "I see, my dear boy," said Aubrey, "that, in spite of his talents and education, he is a great scoundrel; I need no other conviction than a sentiment which fell from your own lips: but of that we must converse when we have more time; at present, we have scarcely enough to dress ourselves before the company will be here."—"I believe, sir," said Arthur, "that some change has taken place; the friends you expected do  
" not

“not come to-day. My mother will inform you more. Shall we go to her?” Aubrey looked surprised, and silently suffered himself to be led by his son to the nursery; where Emily, Arthurina, and Arthur-William, flew from Mrs. Aubrey’s side to load him with caresses.

Having indulged in these, and spoken kindly to Mrs. Miller, who was on all occasions admitted into the confidence of the family; “Well, Emily,” said he, extending his hand to Mrs. Aubrey, who bestowed on it a pressure which conveyed more than the usual welcome of affection—it was a delicate, tremulous touch, that marked a tender concern for the new, painful feelings, to which misfortune had doomed him—“Well, Emily, my love, are we to have the pleasure of dining to-day likewise *en famille*?”—“So it seems, my dear  
“Aubrey,”

“Aubrey,” replied she, taking half a dozen notes from her work-box, and giving them to him. They were apologies; but worded so nearly alike, that they very plainly spoke their purpose and their source. One will show not only the spirit, but almost the letter of the rest.

“Lord and Lady Aimwell present compliments, and are much mortified in requesting that Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey will accept an apology for not attending their party to-day. They deprive themselves of the pleasure on a very particular occasion respecting some extraordinary original paintings; and the circumstance will be fully explained by their mutual friend, Sir Kit Keeping.”

The notes were clearer to Aubrey than to any other of the group around him; and his encounter with the connoisseur-

noisseur-baronet being necessary to the complete unravelling of these insulting apologies, he sat down amidst the darlings of his heart, and fully unboomed himself. Having related the mortifying occurrences of the two last mornings, he learned in turn from Mrs. Aubrey, that she had received some very rude applications for money; and that the gloom he had perceived on the countenances of his wife and children, arose from Arthur's account, of his tutor, which he had given before Aubrey's return, with much warmth and resentment, and which his mother had desired him not to trouble his father with at present. "My  
" dear children," said Aubrey, " these  
" are the first lessons of adversity. What  
" we are not wise enough to learn by  
" precept, we must by experience.  
" Dear Emily!" continued he, addressing Mrs. Aubrey, " let us make the  
" true

“ true use of these occurrences,—in the  
“ most noisome plants bees find the sup-  
“ plies for honey ;—instead of consider-  
“ ing them as mortifications, let us look  
“ upon them as the operations of guar-  
“ dian angels, solicitous to remove our  
“ innocent children from the vortex of  
“ corruption, and to save both them and  
“ us before it is too late. The ways of  
“ Providence are inscrutable ; yet they  
“ are not always so obscure but that we  
“ may often trace the most benign  
“ motives in the evils that befall us.  
“ You have several tales and fables on  
“ this subject, my loves, in the Spec-  
“ tator, Rambler, and other books.”—  
“ Oh, yes, papa,” said Arthurina ; “ it  
“ was only this morning that I read to  
“ mamma the story of Bozaldab ; and  
“ Arthur-William the vision of Amanda,  
“ from the Beauties of History.”—  
“ And what did you read, my dear  
“ Emily.

“Emily,” said Aubrey to his eldest daughter.—“I only worked and listened, papa,” replied she: “but, if you wish it, I will make amends by repeating Parnel’s Hermit.”—“She can say it without missing a word, pa’,” cried Arthur-William. “Then, my dear girl,” said Aubrey, “you shall repeat it after dinner, to set us completely to rights. In the mean time, let me observe, that we are never so sensible of the lessons conveyed in these moral tales as when they go home to our bosoms. I see in the mortifying occurrences of yesterday and to-day, a warning to leave town, and not to reject the curacy of Marinton; I see, in the loss of Aubrey-Hall, a reprehension of the easy, careless life I have led, and a vocation to an active ministry in the sacred profession, for which I was ordained, and which  
“I have



“ I have entirely neglected. I see,” continued he, after a pause, and looking at his son; “ oh! Arthur, I see—yes, I hope  
“ I see your mind snatched from a gulf  
“ over which it hung, through the confidence I too readily placed in the  
“ vain, foolish fellow, who received his  
“ desert from your hands—my dear boy,  
“ you stood on a precipice!”—“ My  
“ dear sir,” said Arthur, “ the voice of  
“ reason must be heard, even when it  
“ comes from such a man: but pray, do  
“ not be uneasy about me; for reason  
“ and affection unite to make your happiness  
“ of more consequence to me  
“ than any thing else on earth.” Mrs. Aubrey gave Arthur one of those affectionate, approving looks, which he often deservedly received from her. “ The  
“ voice of reason,” said his father, taking his hand, and pressing it affectionately, “ *shall* be heard, my dear Arthur;  
“ for .

“ for, though that of presumption is  
“ often mistaken for it, you have an  
“ understanding, I am sure, that will  
“ readily distinguish the difference.”

Here Cæsar announced that dinner was served up. Cheerfulness reigned at the table, notwithstanding the defection of the company : Parnel's poem, modestly and elegantly recited by Emily, crowned the desert with a confirmation of the precepts of resignation ; and the songs of the evening were intermixed with conversation on an immediate removal to Mariton.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Family unanimous respecting Mariton. A benevolent Exertion in an old Acquaintance. Pious Resolutions. More of Mr. Cowper.*

A FAMILY, healthy and united, are always prepared to sustain the malice of fortune. The smiles of the world, like the warmth of a common fire, require to be sustained by the labour or expence of those who would be cheared by them, and, like that, may be extinguished by accident or design: but the smiles of a virtuous family, like the matter of heat itself, which is inherent in the constitution of nature, are inseparable from it, and cease not to animate and chear while life remains. Aubrey,  
awak-

awakened to his errors, began to see favour in misfortune: the mortifications by which the family had been damped, terminated in increasing the glow of natural affection; and now, instead of looking back either with regret or resentment, they contemplated the prospects yet reserved for them with hope and delight.

They assembled next morning in the nursery to breakfast. "I have thought of nothing but Mariton all night long," said Arthurina; "I could not sleep for it."—"It has run in my mind too," said her sister; "I know we shall be so happy in the country."—"While we continue to love one another," said Mrs. Aubrey, "we shall be happy any where."—"Well, Mrs. Miller," said Aubrey, "what think you of Mariton?"—"God send we were all housed there, say I," replied she;

she; "I was sadly afeard we were to  
" have the old life over again; grandeur  
" and want, state and starvation. My  
" dear, worthy, old master and mis-  
" tress broke their hearts, because they  
" could not lower their pride. I am  
" glad, very glad, you are wiser."—  
" 'Sbidlikins ! Mrs. Miller," cried  
Arthur, " do you know you are talking  
of my grandfather and grandmother?"  
—" Ay, God bless you, Mr. Arthur, I  
" do ; and my master knows what I say  
" to be true, and how I loved them  
" both. Bating their nobility and great-  
" nefs, there did not exist two better or  
" nobler souls on the yearth ; but they  
" could never give up externals and  
" show for reality and comfort. Well!  
" I hope I shall never live to see again  
" what they suffered. As for my part,  
" madam," said she to Mrs. Aubrey,  
" I only wish I had orders to begin  
" packing

“ packing up all your things. ‘Sbid-  
“ likins; I am for going in time: a  
“ burnt child dreads the fire.”—“ ‘Sbid-  
“ likins! that is not true, Mrs. Miller,”  
cried Arthur-William; “ do you re-  
“ member, a long time ago, when I  
“ burnt myself, I still went on lighting  
“ crackers to frighten you?”—“ Well  
“ then, Miller,” said Aubrey, “ you  
“ may begin to pack up immediately,  
“ if your mistress pleases; for, as we  
“ all seem of one mind respecting Mari-  
“ ton, the sooner we go the better;  
“ and I will hasten my arrangements to  
“ go off, if possible, next week.”

Arthurina clapped her hands, winked  
her eyes, and huzzaed; the others caught  
the huzza, and the nursery was all up-  
roar for some minutes, with jumping,  
dancing, and shouting. “ How shall  
“ we travel?” said Emily.—“ Oh! in  
“ the coach, to be sure,” cried Arthu-

rina; "it is a nice, roomy coach, and  
"held us all so comfortably going to  
"France."—"I long to have the  
"house to rights," said Emily; "I  
"hope there's a good music-room—  
"oh, la! papa! the organ; we have  
"not heard it so long; it must be  
"put up; we shall be so happy! I  
"hope the people at Mariton are musi-  
"cal!"—"We will have such a charm-  
"ing library, Emily," said Arthur,  
"and take such pleasant walks and  
"rides."—"Sbidlikins!" exclaimed  
Mrs. Miller, "one would conceive you  
"were going to set off post for Aubrey-  
"Hall, instead of a little parsonage-  
"house."—"Is it very little, papa?"  
cried Arthurina.—"I have never seen  
"the house, my love," replied he;  
"but you may be sure, compared with  
"Aubrey-Hall, it is small: yet I have  
"no doubt we shall find it commo-  
"dious;

“dious; for the rectory is a rich one.  
“But let us resolve to be happy, or,  
“rather, let us deserve to be happy,  
“and the size of it will not much  
“signify.”

They continued planning their happiness till Aubrey was called to a gentleman in the parlour. His heart overflowed with affection and joy. What were wealth and worldly consequence to a man possessed of such celestial treasures! Would he have exchanged them for millions of the richest coin? With which of his children would he have parted for a throne? They were indeed intrinsic wealth; their countenances the stamp of the genuine coin of the soul; their virtues the warrant of a heavenly avarice. The slightest diminution of love, the loss of a beloved object, would have been ruin indeed; but fortune, but money, was enjoyed only in getting rid



of it. Glorifying in love, and despising riches, he went down stairs, and, in the parlour, found a man who had neither wife nor children; and who, had he been offered his choice of a son or a ten pound bank-note, would have preferred the latter blessing: an assertion which, though it may surprise some parents, will create no wonder among justices of the peace and parish officers.

Aubrey took Mr. Elton by the hand, and, not having seen him for some time, asked him how long he had been in town? "I am but just arrived, my friend," said he; "I have travelled all night. I come to town on a business most interesting to humanity: poor Winfield! I don't believe you know him: he was the most affectionate father! he had retired from the service for some time—his lieutenant's half-pay was the only support  
" of

“ of his charming family — they are  
“ lovely children, Aubrey; but they  
“ have lost him, and with him every  
“ means of subsistence; he is dead,  
“ and Heaven knows what is to be-  
“ come of them. My intention is to  
“ interest every friend I have, to obtain  
“ something for them from the govern-  
“ ment: you have more powerful inter-  
“ est than I have, and I am come to  
“ you the very first.” Aubrey’s ima-  
gination readily took the impression of  
this sketch, and soon formed it into a  
complete picture of distress. The faces  
he had just left up stairs remained in his  
mind, but fancy changed their smiles to  
tears, and the sorrows of the lieutenant’s  
children were seen on the features of his  
own. “ Alas! Elton,” said he, “ my  
“ interest is not what it was; yet there  
“ are some whom I have never tried,  
“ and therefore must not condemn. I

“ will not hesitate to prove their hearts  
“ on this occasion, while you apply to  
“ others of your friends.”—“ I dare  
“ say,” replied Mr. Elton, “ that a pro-  
“ vision of some kind will be obtained  
“ in time ; but I dread their immediate  
“ sufferings ; and, to apply for private  
“ pecuniary assistance to strangers,  
“ would be to wound the feelings of the  
“ unhappy family. I have myself, as a  
“ friend, gone beyond what I ought,  
“ and indeed have distressed myself so  
“ much for cash, that I really thought  
“ of asking you to lend me a hundred  
“ pounds for a short time.”

As Aubrey was not in want of cash himself, he had never thought of sending the check he received from Sensitive to the banker. It was not enough to discharge the demands with which he had been pressed, and he had kept it in his pocket-book without thinking farther  
of

of it. He meant, indeed, to have returned it to Sensitive, as he was not likely to want money before his pictures were sold; but he now deemed it fortunate that he had not. He mentioned it to Mr. Elton, who offered to bring him the cash for it, as he was going near the banker's. Aubrey gave it to him. "The poor Winfields," said Mr. Elton, "shall be the better for your kind loan. By this night's post they shall receive a supply. I do not ask you to contribute yourself."—"But I do not the less mean it," replied Aubrey; "pray let thirty pounds of the supply be on my account, and you can give me the balance of the check to-morrow morning. Will you breakfast with me? To-day I am particularly engaged." Mr. Elton made the warmest acknowledgments in the names of the unhappy Winfields; and, having ac-

cepted Aubrey's invitation to breakfast next morning at nine o'clock, took his leave.

Aubrey retired to the study, where he remained a considerable time, reviewing his past life, imagining the future, and forming such resolutions as might atone for his former inactivity and remissness. He promised his conscience that he would not only perform the public offices of the church, but that he would in private be the pastor and teacher of his parishioners; that he would alike gather the rich and the poor into the fold of his Master; and that his own family should set an example, not only of virtue, but of piety, to the whole country. The more he reflected, the more he was satisfied with the interposition of Providence; a glow of self-approbation pervaded his frame, and he remembered his

his friend Cowper's appointment with pleasing expectation.

At the hour appointed, Mr. Cowper came: he appeared in the same neat thread-bare drab coat he wore at his first visit; and, as then, won respect and affection by his bald head, penetrating eyes, dignity of demeanour, and friendly designs. He was warmly introduced by Aubrey to Mrs. Aubrey; and individually to Arthur, Emily, Arthurina, and Arthur-William; and, by his amiable manners, was soon on a footing of intimacy with them all. Before they went to dinner, he was informed of Aubrey's resolution to accept the curacy of Mariton, made acquainted with the plans of the family, and asked a variety of questions respecting the house, the appearance of the country, and the characters of the inhabitants. He was describing some of these when they were

c 5. summoned

summoned to dinner. Marston continued the subject of conversation; it seemed possessed of inexhaustible topics; and Mr. Cowper was so charmed with the innocent gaiety and spirits of his young friends, that he took pleasure in gratifying them with minute details.

After a description of the house, from which it appeared, to the delight of all the family, that it was not the little parsonage Mrs. Miller had forejudged, but a considerable building, of a handsome appearance, and very pleasantly situated on the bank of a trout-stream; and, after the young people had arranged every room in it and every spot about it according to their fancy, placed the organ, arranged the library, stocked the pond with carp, collected blackbirds and thrushes in the shrubbery, and lodged the coach in the coach-house, Mr. Cowper, with a friendly laugh, told them, he had never heard  
that

that there was any gold-mine in the premises. The girls did not exactly comprehend him ; but Aubrey did, and explained the resource he meant to bring in aid of the stipend of the curacy and freedom from house-rent at Mariton. Having run over some of the grand subjects among his pictures, and said what they had cost : " You are aware, Cowper," continued he, " that the originals of the great masters lose no value in lying by ; on the contrary, I shall probably get more for the paintings than they cost." Mr. Cowper, who knew nothing of this resource, and had really fought Aubrey from believing that he was completely ruined, smiled with delight at the intelligence ; for, though no judge of the peculiar touches that distinguish the execution of the celebrated painters, he well knew that

c 6                      their



their works were real treasures, and readily turned to gold.

“ I heartily rejoice,” said he, “ to  
“ hear of this ; and the more so, Aubrey,  
“ as I find you determined, neverthe-  
“ less, to take the curacy, on the sub-  
“ ject of which I shall write to the rec-  
“ tor by to-morrow’s post. Had I  
“ known what you had saved from your  
“ wreck, it is ten to one I had not taken  
“ the liberty of forcing myself into your  
“ house.”—“ I am glad you did not  
“ know it,” cried Arthur. —“ I am  
“ glad you did not know it,” echoed  
the girls.—“ I am equally glad; my  
“ dear young friends,” said Cowper,  
“ now that I am sensible of the happi-  
“ -ness I should have missed. Indeed,”  
continued he, turning to Aubrey, “ I  
“ am truly delighted with what you  
“ have told me ; but, trust my expe-  
“ rience, you cannot too soon discharge  
“ from

“ from this dear circle some of the fu-  
“ pernumerary ideas imbibed with the  
“ milk of fortune ; for habit transforms  
“ superfluities into necessaries.”—“ And  
“ do you think, Mr. Cowper,” said  
Mrs. Aubrey, “ that ideas and senti-  
“ ments should be limited according to  
“ the state of one’s purse ?”—“ Only  
“ such,” replied he, “ as are apt to ge-  
“ nerate wants which cannot be grati-  
“ fied but at some expence of virtue.  
“ You will allow, that all notions which,  
“ in their operations, prepare remorse  
“ for the mind, should be discarded.”—  
“ No doubt,” said Mrs. Aubrey ; “ but  
“ surely the cultivation of taste and the  
“ improvement of knowledge can never  
“ have such a tendency.”—“ Where  
“ taste follows nature, and knowledge is  
“ useful, they are perhaps less dange-  
“ rous ; and not at all, where a sufficient  
“ stock of good sense has been laid in  
“ for

“ for the guidance of conduct : but how  
“ difficult is it to relinquish gratifica-  
“ tions for which a taste has been ac-  
“ quired, or to withdraw our mind  
“ from pleasing, though useless, know-  
“ ledge, to fix it on more homely, yet  
“ more serviceable information ? Con-  
“ fess now, that it is very fortunate that  
“ there is a room at Mariton parsonage  
“ fit for the organ to stand in ; and that  
“ you will be able to hire a person who  
“ understands brewing ? ” — “ I own, in-  
“ deed,” replied she, “ that the loss of  
“ music would be dreadful.” — “ Oh !  
“ how satirical you are, Mr. Cowper ! ”  
said Emily. — “ But, as for brewing,”  
added Arthurina, “ you are out there ;  
“ for we all like water better than beer.”  
— “ I like wine best,” cried little Ar-  
thur-William. — “ That’s honest, my  
“ boy,” said Mr. Cowper ; “ and your  
“ sisters like shrubberies, carp-ponds,  
and

“ and coach-houses.” There was a general laugh. “ Why, my dear girls, little as you think it, you have already laid out, in imagination, on the parsonage and grounds, what would support the family handsomely for two years.”—“ I am sure I did not mean it though,” said Emily.—“ Nor I,” added Arthurina.—“ I know,” said Emily, “ that Arthurina and I could give up every thing to make papa and mamma happy.”—“ I know then,” said Mr. Cowper, gazing fondly at her through the big tears that rushed to his eyes, “ I know then that you deserve to be happy; and oh! may God Almighty watch over you, and preserve you, to form their happiness as long as they live !”

There was a violence in Mr. Cowper's emotion, for which Aubrey was at a loss to account. He continued gazing at Emily ;

Emily; and at last gave way to a copious shower of tears. The party, ignorant of the cause, could only view him with wonder: he soon, however, wiped away his tears, and apologized for them. "It is now long since I have been so overcome," said he, "and that you should wonder at this sudden agitation in a stranger is natural; but, simple as were the words Miss Aubrey used, they touched a spring that opens the flood-gates of my heart. 'I could give up every thing, papa, to make you happy;' is a sentence deeply engraven on my soul; it once gave me unmingled pleasure; it delights me now: but, oh! the pang that accompanies the recollection! The pleasures and pains of the mind are nearly allied. You will understand me when, in telling you that I was a father, I add that I am childless."

He

He stopped, and covered his face with his hands. The wonder he had caused made room for pity; and the affection he had already gained in the Aubrey family rapidly augmented. "I have, indeed, two adopted children," said he, removing his hands, and regaining his firmness, "whom I love as a father, and who return my love: they soothe my life; and, though I indulge my imagination in dwelling much on the end of it, I feel they give a great value to the intermediate space."—"I am truly happy to hear it," said Mrs. Aubrey; "are they girls or boys?"—"A boy and a girl," he replied.—"How old are they, Mr. Cowper?" asked Arthur-William.—"Something older than you, my love," said Cowper: "they are about the age of your brother and sister."—"And do they call

“ call you pa’?”—“ They do indeed,  
“ and my sister mamma.”—“ La!”  
cried Arthur-William, “ I dare say I  
“ should love them.”—“ I hope,” said  
Emily, “ that we shall often meet when  
“ we are settled near them at Mari-  
“ ton.”—“ My dear,” replied Mr.  
Cowper, “ we do not live in that part  
“ of the country.”—“ Not live at  
“ Mariton!” exclaimed the whole cir-  
cle.—“ But what of that,” said he, “ we  
“ will contrive to meet notwithstand-  
“ ing; and, when you know more of  
“ us, I hope you will not love us less.”  
—“ Come, Cowper,” said Aubrey,  
“ let us know more of you now: I long  
“ to hear what you have been about  
“ since our youthful days at the uni-  
“ versity. When you were here the  
“ other morning, you gave me a kind  
“ of promise to relate the occurrences  
“ of your life: if it is not too late —”  
—“ Not

—"Not to-night," said Mr. Cowper:  
"it is not only too late, but I must go  
"in quest of Edmund, whom your  
"company had almost made me for-  
"get."—"Is your son in town?" cried  
Arthur.—"Edmund Smyth is his  
"name," said Cowper: "you shall see  
"him before we go; but he is much  
"engaged."—"I wish you had brought  
"him to-day," said Aubrey: "will  
"you come again to-morrow, and  
"bring him with you?"—"He is pe-  
"culiarly circumstanced while we re-  
"main in town," replied Cowper: "he  
"must make the best use of his time  
"while he is here; his evenings are  
"engaged in attending lectures. At  
"what hour do you breakfast?"—"Name your own hour," said Mrs.  
Aubrey.—"Allowing for the London  
"division of time," replied he, "we  
"will be with you at ten o'clock. Ed-  
mund



“ mund must go from you soon ; and,  
“ perhaps, so must I : but, if you are  
“ disengaged in the evening, I will re-  
“ turn and talk about Mariton and my-  
“ self.” He then took his leave of the  
family ; who parted with him reluctantly,  
and sat some time talking of him and of  
Mariton before they parted themselves  
for the night.

## CHAPTER XV.

*A Country Youth. Danger of the first Step in Vice. A Word for brown Complexions, and another for fair ones.*

Soon after nine next morning Aubrey, expecting Mr. Elton earlier than Mr. Cowper, repaired to the breakfast-room, where he continued reading the newspapers till he was joined by the family. They were all assembled some minutes before Mr. Cowper came ; but he was punctual, and brought with him Edmund, whom he presented as his son. Aubrey and Arthur shook hands with him ; and the reception he met with from Mrs. Aubrey and the girls was

8

such

such as may be conceived from their prepossession in favour of Mr. Cowper.

Edmund was a fair, florid, country youth; he was taller and rather more muscular in his limbs than Arthur; the grace with which nature had endowed his person, was almost entirely concealed by the fashion of his clothes, which had been made by a plain village-taylor, of cloth as coarse, but not so thread-bare, as Cowper's coat. There appeared at first a timidity in his manners, which, however, was not displeasing, as it was the effect of diffidence, and not of bashfulness: it was soon worn off by the kind and encouraging conversation of Mrs. Aubrey and the young ladies; and, long before the morning was spent, he began to speak without the preface of a blush.

Aubrey, as soon as the ceremony of introducing Edmund was over, expressed  
his

his surprise at Elton's delay. "Elton!" said Cowper, "Jack Elton! Do you expect him to breakfast?"—"I do indeed," replied Aubrey, drawing Mr. Cowper to the window, where, while the family were talking to Edmund, he acquainted him with the distress of the poor Winfields, and the use he had made of Sensitive's check. "I am sorry to hear it," said Mr. Cowper; "for three hundred pounds is too much for you to lose at present."—"To lose!" cried Aubrey.—"Jack Elton," continued Mr. Cowper, "has been long sinking; but, to save himself, he plunges and catches at every thing about him. Originally a man of some property; his first errors were the result of mere imprudence in the management of his affairs; he next thoughtlessly made others subservient to his wants; and he is now systematically living upon his

“ his wits. He is a proof of the justice  
“ of my observation to Mrs. Aubrey  
“ last night, that ideas of elegance are  
“ dangerous in poverty. Had he had  
“ sufficient strength of mind to discard  
“ fictitious wants, he might by his ta-  
“ lents have spent his life usefully ; and  
“ habit, the most powerful moulder of  
“ nature, would have rendered it agree-  
“ able : but now he is within the vortex  
“ of destruction ; his life is not only use-  
“ less, but wicked ; and it is not im-  
“ probable but it may be shortened by  
“ the law. Let this, however, be be-  
“ tween ourselves. Your friend Sensitive  
“ is at one of the commencing  
“ points of this deplorable route, but he  
“ may yet be saved : his mind is not  
“ debased.”—“ You surprise me very  
“ much,” said Aubrey : “ Sensitive’s  
“ fortune is large.”—“ It is,” replied  
Mr. Cowper ; “ and, in imagination, he  
“ destines

“destines it to noble purposes; but it will  
“vanish suddenly before he is aware of  
“it. Not yet three-and-twenty, and  
“he is already the victim of sensibility.  
“It is true he feels no diminution of  
“his fortune; but, to my knowledge,  
“he has entered into large securities  
“for pretended friends, who will leave  
“him at the day of payment to answer  
“them, and they will go near to ruin  
“him.”—“Poor fellow! I am truly  
“sorry to hear it,” said Aubrey; “he  
“deserves a better fate.”—“So did  
“Elton,” replied Mr. Cowper; “for  
“his descent from honour to the arts of  
“deception was gradual. Not two  
“years ago, he would sooner have died  
“than have invented this tale of the  
“Winfields.” Aubrey stared with astonishment.  
“So just,” continued Cowper, “is the precept that guards us  
“against the first seductions of evil, be  
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“ the objects ever so slight ; for, as the  
“ French proverb says, *ce n'est que le pre-*  
“ *mier pas qui-coute*. When the dominions  
“ of Vice are once entered, the appre-  
“ hensions which kept us out of them  
“ vanish ; crimes as we approach them,  
“ contrary to the laws of natural optics,  
“ decrease their magnitude ; horrors,  
“ on the confines of Virtue, become  
“ imperceptible ; and, frequently, it  
“ is not till the way back is lost in  
“ endless intricate deviations, that we  
“ become sensible of the dreadful pro-  
“ gress. I trust that Sensitive may be  
“ kept within the confines of rectitude.”  
—“ Oh ! he must ! he shall !” said Au-  
brey, warmly.—“ He shall :” said Mr.  
Cowper, “ if I — if the awakening of  
“ his reasoning will effect it.” Here  
Aubrey looked at Mr. Cowper, as if to  
read his character in his countenance ;  
and he was associating some confused  
notions

notions of his own situation and Sensitive's, which, before the connexion was fully conceived, were dispersed, by Mrs. Aubrey's calling him to the table, where the tea was already poured out.

The morning was agreeably and rationally spent. Edmund, by degrees, displayed sentiments and qualities which excited esteem and affection; and Arthur assured him, that he extremely regretted that their habitations in the country were so distant from each other. When they parted, it was with a mutual assurance of friendship; and Mr. Cowper promised to return in the evening.

After they were gone, the family all gave their opinions individually of Edmund. Emily thought him a good young man, handsome in his face, but awkward in his person. Arthurina said he was a little too sedate. Arthur-William, who had been very attentive to



him when he talked of hunting, said he should like to ride his horse: and Arthur declared he was the most sensible, unaffected young man he had ever met with. Both Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey expressed themselves highly in his favour; and said that they longed to know more of the history of himself and his sister. "We shall probably have that satisfaction to-night," said Arthur, "if Mr. Cowper is not diverted from his intention by some interruption."—"Oh! do, papa," cried Emily, "keep him to his word, and don't be at home to any body." Aubrey promised both; and the family then parted for the morning: Mrs. Aubrey, the girls, and Arthur-William, went up to Mrs. Miller; and Aubrey and Arthur strolled to Mr. Flourish's room, to take a view of the pictures, and to learn what company they had attracted.

The

The place was still crowded when they arrived: they met several of their acquaintance, who greeted them with their usual familiarity; and Aubrey had the satisfaction to hear that the paintings were generally admired. Meeting Mr. Flourish, he consulted him on fixing the day for the sale. Mr. Flourish thought, as the town was full, that it should not be delayed above a week longer; and it was accordingly agreed that it should be advertised for that day week.

While he was speaking with the auctioneer, a stranger came up to him, and, pointing to a Madonna which Aubrey had added to his collection about two years before, wished to know if he would part with it by private agreement. Aubrey said he had no objection, provided he could get his price for it: on which Mr. Flourish assuming his professional style, and addressing the stranger, said:

“ Sir, you could not have displayed  
“ finer taste, truer judgment, than in  
“ the choice of this piece. What a  
“ beautiful brunette ! Raphael’s most  
“ charming Madonna. His earlier Ma-  
“ donnas, sir, those I mean of his middle  
“ style, are generally of a lighter and  
“ less taking complexion. I am fully  
“ persuaded, sir, though some men’s  
“ judgments are apt to be guided by  
“ particular attachments, that a com-  
“ plete brown beauty is really prefe-  
“ rable to a perfect fair one : the bright  
“ brown gives a lustre to all the other  
“ colours, a vivacity to the eyes, and a  
“ richness to the whole look, which  
“ one seeks in vain in the whitest and  
“ most transparent skins. All the best  
“ artists in the noblest age of painting,  
“ about Leo the Tenth’s time, used this  
“ deeper and richer kind of colouring :  
“ indeed, the glaring lights introduced  
“ by

“ by Guido, went a great way toward  
“ the declension of the art; as the en-  
“ feebling of the colours by Carlo Ma-  
“ rati has since almost completed the  
“ fall of it in Italy.”

Aubrey was delighted with the science displayed by the auctioneer; but, as he had heard him descant with wonderful rhetoric on the dyes on a china bowl, he had no doubt that his eloquence was chiefly indebted to his memory, and that he had learned much of it verbatim by heart.

“ I am willing,” said the stranger,  
“ to give a good price for it, though I  
“ am certain it is not an original.”—  
“ Not an original! sir,” exclaimed Mr. Flourish; “ I can only tell you that it  
“ cost Mr. Aubrey seven hundred  
“ pounds.” The stranger shook his head, smiled, begged pardon, and walked on. Aubrey went with Mr.

Flourish towards the door; when the latter heard his name called, but, catching no eye, did not distinguish the person.

“Flourish!” said Lord Tallboy, who spoke without removing his eyes from a Magdalen which he was scrutinizing with all the attention and gestures of a professed connoisseur, and whom a rapid glance on the surrounding taste-hunters had informed of the auctioneer’s approach;—“this is a —” —“a very fine “Magdalen, my lord,” added Flourish, who now perceived the young nobleman from the continuance of his voice, and the discontinuance of his remark. “A “very fine one, by G—d!” said Lord Tallboy emphatically; “it is a Magdalen plain enough, by her tears.” —“Nay, my lord, if there were no tears “on the face,” said Flourish, “you “might see, by the humid redness of  
“ the

“ the skin, that she had been weeping  
 “ extremely :—Elle pleure jusqu’aux  
 “ bouts de doigts ; it weeps all over.”  
 “ —Clearly, by G—d ?” returned his  
 lordship : “ Le Brun was a famous  
 “ painter of Magdelens : this is a — a”  
 —“ Titian, my lord.”—“ I know ; it  
 “ is equal to his Venus, by G—d !”—  
 Then pointing to the next picture, he  
 continued : “ What a soft, silky skin  
 “ has the artist given to that Madonna  
 “ next to it ! What an exquisite com-  
 “ plexion ! that must be one of —”  
 “ Guido’s, my lord,” added Flourish  
 “ the colour of the complexion,” con-  
 tinued the auctioneer, “ is the most  
 “ beautiful ever imagined ; it is that  
 “ which Apelles gave to his famous Ve-  
 “ nus, and which, though the picture  
 “ itself be lost, Cicero has in some de-  
 “ gree preserved to us in his excellent  
 “ description of it. It was a fine red,  
 “ beau-

“ beautifully intermixed and incorpo-  
 “ rated with white, and diffused in due  
 “ proportion through each part of the  
 “ body. Such is often the colouring of  
 “ Titian, particularly in the sleeping  
 “ Venus; and such are the descriptions  
 “ of a most beautiful skin in several of  
 “ the Roman poets \* :

“ *Accepit vocem lacrymus Lavinia matris*  
 “ *Flagrantis profuso genus qui plurimus ignum*  
 “ *Subjacet rubor, & violaverit ostro*  
 “ *Alba rosa; tales virgo dabat ore colores †.*”

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\* Beaumont's *Crito*.

† *Accepit vocem lacrymis Lavinia matris,*  
*Flagrantes persusa genas; cui plurimus ignem*  
*Subjecit rubor, & calefacta per ora cucurrit:*  
*Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro*  
*Siquis ebur, aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multâ*  
*Alba rosâ; tales dabat ore colores.*

*ÆN. 12. 69.*

At this a flood of tears Lavinia shed;  
 A crimson blush her beauteous face o'erspread,  
 Varying her cheeks by turns with white and red. }  
 The

Arthur endeavoured in vain to follow the sense of these lines ; and Aubrey was now fully convinced that Flourish spoke by rote ; and that he had conned his lesson both for Raphael's bright brown, and the fine red and white of Apelles ; but that his memory, as is natural, was truer to his mother-tongue than to one which he did not understand.

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The driving colours, never at a stay,  
 Run here and there ; and flush and fade away :  
 Delightful change ! thus Indian ivory shows,  
 Which with the bordering paint of purple  
     glows ;  
 Or lilies damask'd by the neighbouring rose. }

DRYDEN.



## CHAPTER XVI.

*Conticuere omnes. Commencement of Mr. Cowper's History.*

THE day passed without a sight, or even recollection of Mr. Elton. The minds of the Aubreys were engrossed with the hopes placed on the pictures, with the thoughts of settling at Mariton, and with the expectation of Mr. Cowper, who came as he had promised. He took his chair by the corner of the fire. After some little chat about the neighbours whom the family would find in the country, observing their attention prepared for the recital of his own history, he drew a small table to him, rested his arm upon it, and began as follows :

“ I know

“ I know not, my friends, any better means for opening the hearts of others; than that of opening our own to them. It is the greatest proof we can give of our interest in any one, to disclose our secrets, show our faults, confess our sorrow for them, commune on virtue, and profess affection; therefore, having formed a plot upon the hearts of this circle, I have the more readily determined to make them completely acquainted with the man who asks their love. ‘ A crowd is not company, faces  
‘ are but a gallery of pictures, and talk  
‘ but a tinkling cymbal where there is  
‘ not love,’ said one well acquainted with nature: ‘ you may take farza to  
‘ open the liver, steel to open the spleen,  
‘ flour of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain, but no receipt  
‘ opens the heart but a true friend.’  
Aubrey, I know your opinion of old on  
friendship,

friendship, and experience has convinced me that it is in a great degree a just one. That friendship in which we impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatever lies upon the heart, is almost a fable ; it may have flourished in former ages, like chivalry ; but, like that, has been long deemed Quixotism. An interchange of kindnesses, while mutually conducive to self-interest, is as much as can be expected in these days. I allow all this ; yet, believe me, I have been fortunate enough to witness pure, unchangeable friendship in one instance ; and, as a second instance, I declare to you I have participated it myself in a degree never surpassed in reality, scarcely to be surpassed in imagination. Form your friendships, my dear children, where nature dictates, at home, among yourselves ; and, if you find it elsewhere, you will have the more reason

to rejoice; but at home it is the most delightful. I speak from experience—mine was at home. I will not, however, anticipate.

“ Having the start of you, Aubrey, I had left the university about a year, I think, when I heard of your marriage. I was at the time preparing to go abroad to my father, who had left England two years before; finding it necessary, as he pretended to me, for his health, to live in a purer climate than his own country afforded, and he had chosen Oporto for his residence. The allowance he made me was handsome; and, had he not pressed me in a very warm manner to go to him, I should have been contented to continue at home, for a reason which I shall now tell you, but to which he was then a stranger. In doing this, my dear young friends, I make a confession of my first crime, which, from  
being

being the greatest delight, became the source of the greatest miseries of my life. *Your hearts, your principles* are in no danger; for you are educated in the bosoms of your parents, where you imbibe virtues that will stand the assaults of all temptations; therefore, when I tell you that, in my childhood and youth, all I received of my father himself, were the usual pleasures of the times and supplies of money, do not hate me when you hear that I deceived him.”—“What a pity!” cried Emily.—“You will think so still more by and by,” resumed Mr. Cowper: “it is a pity, my love, that the nature of man is in a state that requires the vigilance and guidance of persons interested in his welfare, to keep him in the path of rectitude. Youth ought not to be left to itself, or to the care of negligent hirelings. The parent who does not himself frequently

quently examine the heart of his child, who does not seasonably weed out the roots of error, and sow and guard the seeds of virtue, has not much reason to complain if he find tares growing with the corn. In the present state of nature, evil will grow up with good; and he that would have the latter greatly preponderate in the mind of his child, must seasonably see the former removed. I do not, however, complain of my father, for he meant well; but certainly I was left too much to myself, at an age when reason cannot be mature.

“ You remember, Aubrey, that I used to stay but little at Cambridge, and you will be surprised to hear that I was a husband before my name was entered at the university.” — “ I am indeed; surprised,” said Aubrey; “ how could you, at that age, keep it so profound a secret?” — “ I dreaded my father,”

father," replied Cowper: " he kept me at school till I was nineteen years old, for the purpose of grounding me well in the classics before I went to college. In the last year of my stay, I was one day walking with a Virgil in my hand through some fields, on a foot-path not much frequented but on market-days, leading to a village on the Gloucester road, between three and four miles from Thornbury, where I was at school: getting over a stile, I perceived, at some distance, a man with his arms round the waist of a young woman, who was struggling to free herself from him. I quickened my pace, and soon came up with them. On observing me he quitted his hold, but continued to walk at her side. I concluded from this that they were acquainted, and I passed them without any scrutiny; when I suddenly felt myself seized by the arm, and dragged back-

backwards: looking round, I found the girl clinging to me, and the man pulling her away. Her face was beautiful, and in tears. 'Oh, sir!' cried she, with a tremulous voice and terrified countenance, 'save me, I beseech you!' I instinctively said, 'let the girl alone.' — 'Do you let her alone,' answered he, 'and go about your business.' On this I examined him from head to foot, and found that he had more bone than I had; but I instantly resolved, notwithstanding, to rescue the girl at the risk of a good drubbing. 'You have no more business to meddle with her than I have,' said I, 'nor so much, for she applies to me herself.' — 'You had better go about your business,' repeated he, looking sternly; 'the girl's a relation of mine, and I'll take care of her.' I could not help smiling. 'A relation of yours?' said I: 'Why! she is a country girl; and



‘ and I should take you for a gentleman,  
‘ *by your clothes.*’

“ Whether irritated by the sting in this expression, or encouraged by my appearance of youth, I know not, but, still holding the girl with his left hand, he aimed a blow at me with his right, which I fortunately parried, and returned so earnestly, that, to defend himself, he was under the necessity of letting the object of the contest go. She immediately took to her heels, and was probably out of sight in a minute; but I was too seriously engaged to follow her with my eyes. The assailant and I were now front to front, and a desperate battle ensued. Neither of us was a skilful combatant, and his strength was certainly superior to mine; yet not so much but that I kept him in play a considerable time: from want of knowledge in the noble art of pugilism, heavy blows  
were

were mutually received, and blood and bruises were exchanged. At length, finding that I began to be exhausted, I resolved to make a last powerful effort for the victory; and, collecting all my force, I took an aim with my fist at his chest, and, with a joint impetus, threw my head into his face. He fastened his hands about me, and, clinging as he reeled, fell, and pulled me along with him. In the struggle to disengage myself, my arm got into an awkward position, and the bone snapped as we came to the ground. In this state I believe he would have murdered me, had he not, as he rose, heard the hollowing of people approaching in the adjoining field; on which he gave me a severe kick on my side, which I sometimes feel to this day, and made off as fast as he could. He was over the one stile some minutes before the persons whose voices had

had alarmed him appeared at the other. I lay on the ground, quite exhausted, when they came up to me. The girl herself, whom I had rescued, was foremost. Perceiving me from the stile, she shrieked, left the others, and running forward, dropped breathless at my side. We were soon surrounded by a group of men and women, armed with sticks and pitchforks. I told them that my antagonist could hardly be out of the next field; on which some of them set off after him: very fortunately for him, he outstripped them.

“ In the mean time, I raised myself to a sitting posture, and laid my broken arm on my knee. The innocent cause of my disaster soon recovered, and, as she looked at me with eyes of grateful inquiry, I could not, in spite of the pain I suffered, help admiring the beauty of her face. The contour was oval, the features

features prominent, her nose was aquiline, her mouth a perfect rose-bud, her complexion an exquisite mixture of white and red, a little tanned, the colour of her eyes a deep blue, that of her hair a light brown, and it waved in natural ringlets about her forehead, which was shaded by a modest bonnet. Nature had been equally bountiful to her person: she was slender, above the middle size, and, though her coarse russet gown marked the rustic, her form possessed those native, simple graces, which art may improve, but cannot give. At that time I admired beauty as it struck my eye, without thinking of the nature and causes of it; but I have since reflected with more judgment on the reason of the impression it then made on my heart as well as on my eye. Fanny's beauty ———"

Here

Here Mr. Cowper paused: he rose, walked to the end of the room, shed some tears to memory, wiped them from his cheeks, returned, and resumed his story. The Aubreys were kept silent by the sympathy produced by his distress. He proceeded without taking notice of the moisture which glistened in their eyes.

“ Her name was Fanny Ross. Fanny’s beauty at that time made its impression by the emanation of soul which appeared in her eyes, on her lips, in her attitudes. The noble and virtuous passions are the grand source of grace, of that grace that creates love; for a certain degree of grace may be attendant on the mere motion of the limbs and of the muscles in the face; but it is the internal amiable movements, it is the fine emotions of the soul, which, expanding on the surface of the human form, bestow

flow upon it the grace that captivates the heart. Fanny's countenance and attitude, which made me forget my broken arm, beamed with an emotion — oh! I remember it but too well," said he, raising his shoulders, and pressing his temples towards each other with a hand that covered his eyes:—"an emotion," continued he, "the best adapted to win affection, as it is the effect of one of the most pleasing virtues of thinking beings. Though my face was bloody and disfigured, and might have excited horror, Fanny's eyes and lips, and posture, were governed by GRATITUDE: it was mingled with much anguish, and a considerable degree of silent self-reproach; and the meanness of her rustic vestments were lost in the radiance of the united emotions." Here Mrs. Aubrey smiled. "I see," said he, "you think that, though my knowledge is im-

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proved, my description is better suited to my age at the time of the event, than to my present years; but so it is, my dear Mrs. Aubrey, I never can speak of it without ardour.

“ On reviving, she stood up, her hands clasped, her head a little on one side and bent forward. To relieve her, I made light of the state I was in, and telling her with a smile that I should be very well when I had washed my face with a little fresh water, desired her to go and bring me some. I said this to spare her the grief of knowing that my arm was broken; and she flew to obey me. I then told the fact to the people about me, and requested that one of the men would accompany me to Thornbury. I had near three miles to walk. The good folks raised me on my legs; and one of the women having made me a sling with a large neck handkerchief,  
and

and put my arm into it, they all went with me through the fields as far as the high-road, where I was taking leave of them, when I saw Fanny getting over the opposite stile; upon which I resolved to wait till she came up. In her hands she had a wooden bowl and a bottle of water, and from her pocket she took a clean white towel and a piece of soap. At sight of the sling she turned pale; and, when I told her that I could not wash my face, her tears ran down her cheeks, and she asked me to allow her to do it. I said I could make a better use of the water, and, taking the bottle from her, I put it to my mouth, and drank a good draught of it. This revived me very much; I assured her it did; and then pressed her to return to the village with the good people whom she had brought to my assistance. She answered with a fresh shower of tears;



while the villagers blessed me. One of them accompanied me; and the rest, with Fanny, returned home.

“ Being refreshed by the water, I walked on with less difficulty. I leave you to imagine the bustle at the school when I arrived. The surgeon was immediately brought, and declared the fracture to be a simple one. Having set the bone, he ordered me to keep my room, to which I was confined a full fortnight. When the cause of my battle was known, it gained me great credit, not only in the house, but throughout the town.

“ One morning in the second week of my confinement, the chambermaid, who had before paid me some compliments as she put the room to rights, said to me with a smile: ‘ La! master Cow-per, what a very pretty girl that is ‘ you fought for.’ I asked her how she knew?

knew? ‘I can’t but know,’ replied she, ‘when I have seen her every day, every day, since you have been ill.’ I was delighted with this new proof of the girl’s goodness; and, to confess the truth, she ran very much in my head; for, as the chambermaid might have said, I thought of her every day, every day.

“Has she really called every day?” said I.—‘She has indeed, Master Cowper’ replied Betty, ‘till yesterday, and then she sent a man.’ I begged the maid, if he came the next day, to let me see him; which she promised to do. My intention was to make some inquiries respecting the beautiful rustic, and the person who insulted her; and I was impatient for the next day’s call. Betty was true to her word; and, about tea o’clock, introduced into my room the man who had accompanied me home on the day of the combat, and with

whom the pain I suffered had prevented my conversing. The villager was a middle-aged man, of a pleasing aspect, with rustic, but agreeable manners. After expressing his own satisfaction at the progress of my recovery, he assured me that I had been the talk of the village of Melford ever since I had been Fanny Ross's friend against the ruffian who had attacked her in the field.

" In talking with this countryman, I learned that Fanny was the only child of a small farmer, who, after a laborious life, had begun to lay something by, when he was suddenly cut off from all the cares of this world; that he left no property of any value behind him; but that, having subscribed to a tontine for his wife and daughter, they had annuities, amounting together to thirty pounds; that the widow and her daughter lived in a cottage in Melford, where,  
by

by raising poultry and taking in plain work, they almost doubled their annuity, and were beloved by all the neighbours.

‘As for that there villain who affronted ‘Fanny,’ said he, ‘noabody knows unny ‘thing about ‘un, where he went to, or ‘where he come from. That there day ‘was the first time she ever seed ‘un in ‘her whole life.’

“This,” continued Mr. Cowper, “is a very extraordinary circumstance; he never was heard of before nor since. He was apparently a genteel young man, and very little older than myself; but I do not know that I should have recognized him had I met him again; for I was more particular in tracing the muscles of his limbs than his features, and the whole business was so agitated and short, that it is no wonder if the impression of his fists superseded the impression of his features on my eyes.

In a different place, and after a short lapse of time, I could not have identified him. Having satisfied myself as far as the information of my visitor extended, I dismissed him with my thanks, desiring him to tell Fanny that, as I was now so well, she must not give herself the trouble of sending or coming to inquire for my health; and to assure her that she need not be sorry for what I had suffered, as that was past; and that the remembrance of the service I had done her would always be extremely pleasing to me."

Here Mr. Cowper pausing to drink a glass of water, the young folks made some remarks on what he had related. "Dear!" said Emily, "I pity poor Fanny; for I should have been so unhappy myself if I had been the cause of the breaking of your arm."—"I wonder," said Arthurina, "what became

“came of the villain!” — “I dare  
“say,” observed Arthur, “that he  
“was hanged afterwards for some crime  
“or other.” — “I think,” cried Ar-  
thur-William, “what a nice blow it  
“was Mr. Cowper gave him with his  
“head. O! how I should liked to  
“have pounced him for pretty Fanny  
“Ross!” — Mrs. Aubrey observed how  
clearly the interposition of Providence  
sometimes appeared. — “It does,” said  
Mr. Cowper, with a sigh; “but then,  
“alas! at other times, how unaccount-  
“able!” — “True, my friend,” re-  
plied Aubrey; “but we should pro-  
“bably be no gainers were the veil  
“constantly removed; we should have  
“to look no farther than this life for  
“an explanation of the moral system.  
“It seems to be the summit of a wife  
“benevolence in our present state to  
“give sufficient indications of a super-  
B 5 “intending

“intending Providence, yet to leave  
“such obscurity as to compel us to  
“place our chief hope on another  
“world.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

*Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.*

"I HOPE you were quite well at the "end of the fortnight," said Emily to Mr. Cowper; who smiled at the hint of impatience, and resumed his narrative. "In about a fortnight I thought myself perfectly well; but, though I was allowed to take exercise in the air, I was ordered to let it be gentle, and to keep my arm in a sling. It has been observed, that he who has once put a plant into the earth, takes delight in watering it, in attending to it, in rearing it: so with the heart; the first kindness or service rendered to a worthy object, though



gratuitous, induces repetition, and an interest in his welfare becomes naturally a gratification of the soul. The service I had rendered Fanny Ross endeared her to me ; I felt anxious about her ; and the first use I made of my liberty was to walk over to Melford, where I soon found the cottage in which she and her mother lived.

“ It stood alone on an elevated green, near a pretty brook, called the Mel. It was shaded by two large walnut trees and a wild cherry : a little up the brook was a rustic bridge, beneath which the stream fell in a beautiful silver sheet over a rock, which seemed thrown by nature in its way to embellish the prospect ; it was a fine object from the village : the inhabitants had dammed the banks on each side even with it, to prevent the water passing round ; and, to heighten the beauty, they had bent over it  
a tree

a tree growing on the bank ; and, without spoiling the look of the uneven arch formed by it, had contrived to place a board, for a passage. On the farther side of the brook, there was a variety of trees, some small, some majestic, planted for shades in the undulating pastures of the rich *dairysts* of Gloucestershire ; and to a great distance the eye was feasted with the view of numerous herds of sleek kine. The village stood on a gentle slope down the stream, which meandered from it, leaving it gradually on an eminence to the right. It was a kind of straggling street, of which the cottages, though built in the common way, had a certain superior air of neatness that bespoke a greater degree of comfort reigning within them than is usually found in the labouring class of men. At the bottom, but at a little distance from the street, was the church  
and

and vicarage-house : the latter, though uninhabited, was commodious ; the former was in the Gothic stile. From the end of the village, the cart-way ran along the side of a woody acclivity, and, about a mile off, crossed the stream, which, after a serpentine course through the valley, intersected the road, and followed the curve of the hill."

"What a beautiful picture have you drawn!" said Mrs. Aubrey.—"I have been the more particular in describing it," resumed Mr. Cowper, "as I shall have to speak more of it hereafter. Though I have now painted it to you, I did not stop long at the time to survey it, but immediately went in to Dame Ross's cottage, which was by far the largest and best in the village. Both mother and daughter were at home : the former being told who I was, became very warm in her acknowledgments, and  
blessed

bleſſed me again and again ; but what a difference was there in Fanny ! her countenance no longer bore that ardent ſolicitude, no longer were her hands claſped in that extaſy of mingled gratitude and anguiſh, that had impreſſed her image on my mind, and led my fancy to form a thouſand romantic plans for her good : cold, diſtant, and reſerved, ſhe ſcarcely raiſed her eyes towards me ; and when, following her mother's example, ſhe ſaid ſhe was glad to ſee me well, the blood ruſhed to her face as if ſhe had committed a crime. I felt at that moment a new ſenſation, which I certainly did not bring to the cottage with me ; and, though I could not account for it, this coldneſs and reſerve awakened in me an anxiety to which, till that moment I was a ſtranger. Though a cottager, and under a conſiderable obligation to me, I dreaded the loſs of her eſteem,

esteem, and I would have gladly broken my arm again for such another look as it had procured me before. No, it was not to be my lot; Fanny was coldly grateful, respectful, and grave. I made several attempts, by kind speeches, to put her at her ease and obtain a smile, but in vain; she maintained the same demeanour while I remained. As I left the cottage, however, I observed tears start to her eyes; and I was perplexed the more to account for her behaviour. In my way back to Thornbury, she entirely occupied my thoughts, and became afterwards almost the constant subject of them.

“ Having been brought up altogether at a school, the instructions I received related chiefly to classical knowledge; for, at these academies, all real knowledge of things, of society, of the passions, virtues, vices, and general nature  
of

of man, is, as you know, left to be collaterally picked up how one can. Without thinking of love or marriage, or the difference of situations in life, I was, while a school-boy, in love with Fanny Ross. As I was not thought to be in any danger from the breaking of my arm, it had not been deemed necessary to inform my father of it till I was able to go out, and then I wrote to him myself about it, a few days before I took my walk to Melford. When I returned to the school, I found a kind, affectionate answer from him, in which he told me that my master had pronounced me sufficiently prepared to change from the school to the university; and that a friend of his, then at Bristol, would in a few days call for me, and bring me up to town with him. This intelligence, which three weeks before would have been the most pleasing I could receive,

now

now filled me with consternation. I was wretched at the thought of never more seeing Fanny Ross. I walked towards Melford the very next day; but, as I approached the village, I recollected the solemnity of my reception the day before, and was deterred from proceeding to the cottage. The same recollection kept me in a state of irresolution till my father's friend arrived, and I quitted the country without another sight of Fanny.

“ My father received me with great affliction; but he was not of a communicative disposition on any subject, and least of all on his affairs. He lived with some splendor, possessing a considerable fortune, chiefly personal. My mother had been dead some years, leaving him a widower with two children, my sister and myself. He told me that, having had from my master an excellent character of me, he would not  
confine

confine me with a tutor at the university ; but that I should myself make my choice of the assistance I might want in the pursuit of my studies ; that, to enable me to provide myself with whatever was necessary to complete them, and at the same time to live like a gentleman, my allowance should be liberal, that it should be four hundred a-year ; and, if that did not suffice, he would make it five : all he requested was that I should be strictly just in all dealings, and form rich and respectable connexions ; hinting that, with a good person, manners, liberal expences, and conduct, I might look high among the daughters of wealth and rank for a wife. When he mentioned Cambridge to me, I expressed a preference for Oxford ; because I reflected on its being so much nearer to Melford : but, for a reason which he did not then tell me, and which I afterwards



wards learned was his sometimes living incognito himself in the neighbourhood of the latter, he made it a point with me to go to Cambridge.

“ Having filled my pockets with money, he advised me, before I went to the university, to go and pay a visit to my sister, who was at his country-house near Reading, with an elderly lady, a distant relation, who, since my mother’s death, had kept my father’s house, and under whose protection my sister had received education from proper persons. This I was happy to do, as I longed to see my sister; and accordingly, after spending some days with him, I took leave of him and set out for Reading. I loved my sister; but, to tell the truth, I thought on the way only of Fanny Ross, and it came into my head to divide my visit between them. I staid three days in Berkshire; and then, pretending a wish

to see an old schoolfellow who lived near Marlborough, I set out unattended across the country, and, avoiding Thornbury, I went by a circuitous route to Berkley, where I took up my quarters. On the very day of my arrival, an incident occurred really worthy of a romance, and, if I had but a book in my hand, you might think I was reading you a novel.

“ After refreshing myself at the inn, I set out with the design of walking to Melford, which is but two miles farther from Berkley, across the fields, than it is from Thornbury. About half-way, at a little distance from me, on the foot-track, I observed something which, as I approached it, looked like a book; and guess my surprise, on taking it up, to find it my own Virgil, which I lost on the day I fought for Fanny Rofs, and which I had never thought of after. What astonished me was the neat case it had

had got, and the high state of preservation it was in. Opening it, I found my name thus written by myself, *E libris Caroli Cowper*; and beneath this appeared, new to me, and in a hand less free, *Charles Cowper, his book; God bless him.* I was sitting on a stile, examining the leaf, when the sound of some one approaching attracted my notice: I looked towards Melford, and saw a young woman, whom I soon perceived to be Fanny, in the same dress she had on, the day I first saw her.

“Unwilling that she should know me till she was quite close, I slipped off the stile, and walked slowly along the cross-hedge with the *Vi gil* in my hand. I had made but a very few paces, when running, and out of breath, she was at my heels.—‘That’s my book, sir,’ cried she, panting violently.—‘And do you read Latin, Fanny?’ said I, turning  
ing

ing round. I cannot give you an adequate idea of her face and form when she recognized me. Surprise rushed into her countenance; she continued panting, and was turning to fly away. This I caught her in time to prevent. ‘Sure you don’t know me, Fanny,’ said I, ‘or you would not run from me.’ This remark restored her recollection, and I saw that it told her she had betrayed herself. She cast her eyes to the ground, a slight blush tinged her forehead; on her *cheek* a slight blush could not be seen; a smile, half forced half natural, displayed her beautiful teeth; she handled the flounce of her apron, and, dropping a curtesy with something more of grace than rustics usually do, said: ‘Bless me! who should have thought of seeing you here, Mr. Cowper? I heard you were gone from Thornbury long ago.’—‘Yes,’ said I,

I, ' I went away ; but I am come back  
' on ' purpose to see you, Fanny.'—  
' Bless me, Mr. Cowper,' cried she,  
' how can you say so !'—' I should have  
' come to see you again before I went  
' away,' said I, ' only you did not ap-  
' pear glad to see me the time I did  
' come. Why was not you glad to see  
' me ?'—' Indeed,' replied she, ' I was  
' glad, but —'—' But what, Fanny ?'  
—' Pray don't ask me,' said she : ' you  
' know you are a gentleman ; and so  
' Dick Cowfel's father, one of our  
' neighbours, told my mother ; and that  
' I should not go to Thornbury myself  
' to ask after your arm ; and that it was  
' not proper for a young woman to be  
' too thankful to a gentleman : but I  
' can't for my soul see why a poor girl  
' should not be as grateful as any body  
' else ; and, to say the truth, I think I  
' have more learning than Dick Cow-  
' fel's

‘ fel’s father, though he is a very good  
‘ man ; and I know he had a spite at me  
‘ for refusing Dick last Thornbury fair,  
‘ and said I was proud, because I had  
‘ been told that I had gentle blood in my  
‘ veins ; for they say that my father’s  
‘ father’s father was a gentleman, yes  
‘ indeed, and came from the North ;  
‘ and that it was through honest mis-  
‘ fortunes that our family fell away, and  
‘ was obliged to work : yes, indeed,  
‘ and my own father used to speak as if  
‘ he was a gentleman, and yet he was  
‘ not proud. No more am I, I assure  
‘ you ; for, after all, what is blood but  
‘ blood ? and it is the heart, and not  
‘ the blood, which makes people bet-  
‘ ter or worse.’

“ This genuine simplicity, this noble-  
ness of nature alone, would have won  
my heart, but former events had already  
captivated me, and, to know that Fan-

ny's coldness and reserve had been the result of compulsion, gave me unspeakable pleasure. 'You are right, Fanny,' said I, 'one good heart is worth more than a thousand empty names; and such a girl as you more than all the artificial babies that fashion can produce.'—'Dear me, Mr. Cowper,' cried she, 'I did not think you would banter me so.'—'I do not banter you: but tell me, Fanny,' said I, pointing to the name that had been written on the leaf of my Virgil after I lost it, 'did you write this?' She blushed and hesitated. 'Perhaps,' continued I, 'you got Dick Cowfel to write it.'—'Dick Cowfel!' cried she, laughing:—it was the first time I had seen her laugh; and I saw that nature had endowed her cheerful emotions with as much grace as her mournful ones.—'Dick Cowfel! if I could not have done it myself, I should

‘ should never have thought of asking  
‘ Dick Cowfel: Dick’s no scholar; but  
‘ he is a very good young man though.’  
—‘ And not a bit the worse,’ said I,  
‘ for loving you: but, if you wrote this  
‘ with your own hand, Fanny, I hope  
‘ you mean to be as good as your word,  
‘ and not to pray without meaning;  
‘ what you pray for you can give.’

“ Fanny did not exactly understand me; she looked confounded; a slight frown brought the inner points of her eye-brows a little nearer to each other. She seemed to recollect her situation. ‘ Dear me!’ she exclaimed, ‘ what am I about? I should be at home by this!’ —‘ Won’t you answer me?’ said I.— ‘ Sir!’—Oh! how independent of fortune and of rank is the dignity of Virtue! all things else they may embellish and ennoble; but Virtue carries its inherent nobility into every bosom, wherever  
F 2 found,



found, and is as glorious in the peasant as the prince. Fanny's monosyllable possessed the dignity of virtue; it was sufficiently emphatic, without being bold. Impressed with notions of the difference of situation, her humility led her to imagine that virtuous love was not to be expected from a gentleman. I immediately undeceived her. 'Can you,' cried I, 'suspect for a moment that, after saving, I would destroy you? It would be asking a curse, Fanny, not a blessing. The way to bless me is to be my wife.'—'What!' cried she, 'your virtuous wife! Oh, no, I can never hope for that!' I had some difficulty to convince her that I was serious; but at last, in the innocence of her heart, she confessed that I had been constantly in her thoughts; that she had found and secreted my Virgil for love of me; and that she could conceive no  
happy-

happiness whatever equal to that of being my wife.

“ Notwithstanding this, I saw a degree of compunction poisoning her pleasure, in the comparative view she took of our situations and of her own defective education. With respect to the former, I put her in mind of her own reasoning, and persuaded her that happiness was the result of love and virtue, without reference to rank; and as for the latter, I told her, that I would undertake in a short time to put her upon a par with the best-educated of her sex, and that no employment on earth could be so delightful to me. ‘ Dear me!’ exclaimed the innocent, lovely girl, ‘ how happy we might be in reading and learning all day long! and then, as to the matter of gentility, I know I am sure if you could find out, that I come of a very good family. Isn’t there a great house in London

F 3

where

‘ where every body’s family is wrote  
‘ down in big rolls of paper and large  
‘ books with painted arms? I remem-  
‘ ber hearing my father say that my  
‘ grandfather told him that our family  
‘ was there.’—I made her happy by  
saying, that I would inquire when I went  
to town: but that, whether it was or was  
not so, I did not care; for that, in my  
opinion, a virtuous woman was far above  
rubies.—‘ Dear me!’ said she, ‘ that’s  
‘ a verse in the Proverbs of Solomon;  
‘ it is in the last chapter; I can say  
‘ from that verse to the end by heart;  
‘ shall I say it to you?’—‘ Do,’ replied  
I, ‘ and let us walk on towards Mel-  
‘ ford.’ Her heart fluttered with de-  
light at the opportunity she found to  
convince me that she had some learning;  
and beginning with, ‘ Who can find a  
‘ virtuous woman, for her price is above  
‘ rubies,’ she repeated to the end of the  
chapter,

chapter, blushing, and watching, in frequent glances, the approbation of my countenance. When she had done, I could not help throwing my arms round her and kissing her; at which she grew angry, and said, ‘Now, don’t you do that again, Mr. Cowper, unless you want to quarrel with me.’ I assured her I would not: ‘but, Fanny,’ said I, ‘what you have been repeating is both family and fortune to you; and, if you will promise to be my wife, you will make me happy.’ Her answer was, that I must ask her mother; for, as to what she herself would do, it was as plain as if she had spoken it.

“I see, my kind friends,” said Mr. Cowper, interrupting his narrative, “that you are not tired of my circumstantial detail: I rejoice at it; for, in recalling these events of my life, I feel myself impelled to dwell upon them with

“ a minuteness approaching to their reality: but I must, however, be more brief, or I shall have to postpone the rest of my story till we meet at Marton, as I have so little time left me in town.

“ Fanny,” continued he, “ having innocently and undesignedly shown me how favourable her heart was to me, I made use of it to obviate all her objections, and to prevail upon her to assist me in accomplishing our union, in which less difficulty occurred than I feared; for I conceived that her mother would require my father’s consent, and pique Fanny’s pride into a resolution not to marry without it. In this, however, I was mistaken: the old lady had indeed discovered her daughter’s inclination while I was confined at Thornbury by my broken arm; and, having consulted her neighbour Cowfel, had prevented her

con-

continuing to call daily, and had given her the lesson of reserve which she had practised at the visit I made them; but this had only been in consequence of her not conceiving it possible that I could return her love honourably, and she was very anxious for the preservation of her daughter's innocence and happiness.

“ Giving Fanny her Virgil, I sent her on to tell her mother what had passed between us; and I determined to go and talk to her neighbour Cowfel myself. Though she called Cowfel her neighbour, he lived full half a mile from her up the river, and rented some acres of pasturage, on which he had a few cows, that supplied his dairy; and Cowfel, in a small way, was a thriving man. On entering his house, I was agreeably surprised to find myself received by the old man with a smile. ‘ Walk in, Mr.

‘ Cowper,’ said he, ‘ walk in; I be  
‘ quite alone: my dame, with Dick and  
‘ Susan, be all gone to Thornbury the-  
‘ day; but they ’ull be back by and by.  
‘ I be glad to see you, and always shall;  
‘ for I love a good action to my soul,  
‘ and I have loved you ever sin’ you  
‘ fought for Fanny Rofs. But I thought  
‘ you was gone, Master Cowper, I thought  
‘ you was gone. What brings you again  
‘ into these parts?’—Glad of so fortunate an opportunity of unburdening my mind, I immediately answered him with a question to the point: ‘ Can’t you  
‘ guess, farmer?’—‘ Hum! I don’t like  
‘ to guess,’ replied Cowser; ‘ I have  
‘ too much respect for you to guess the  
‘ only thing that could lessen it; the  
‘ only thing I can think of that could  
‘ bring you from London to Melford.’  
—‘ Though I am sure you have guessed  
‘ very’ right, farmer,’ said I, ‘ yet I  
‘ hope

‘ hope you won’t like me the worse.  
‘ Would you have me be a flock or a  
‘ stone, without feeling?’—‘I would have  
‘ you be an honourable man, young gen-  
‘ tleman,’ replied he; ‘ and, let me tell  
‘ you, that won’t be, if what I guess be  
‘ right.’—‘ Come, my good friend,’  
said I, ‘ don’t let Fanny’s refusal of  
‘ Dick prejudice you against me.’—  
‘ Her refusal of Dick prejudice me!’  
cried Cowfel; ‘ why, you don’t know  
‘ me, Master Cowper: I let Dick, poor  
‘ toad, ask her the question, to satisfy  
‘ himself; but, Lord bless your heart!  
‘ Fanny Ross be fitter for a squire than  
‘ for Dick. Besides, my boy had only  
‘ neighbour’s fare: why, she has re-  
‘ fused all the young men in the parish;  
‘ and, to tell you my mind, that’s the  
‘ only thing I dislike in Fanny: she is  
‘ as proud as Lucifer; I mean as to a  
‘ husband; for, as to every thing else,  
F 6                    ‘ nobody



‘ nobody can be more humble. As for  
‘ refusing Dick, she was in the right; I  
‘ knew she would: but, when she goes  
‘ to refuse men of property, as I know  
‘ she has, confound her pride; I think  
‘ she be mad, to prefer twiddling and  
‘ twisting her fingers to make lace.’

“ I need not tell you how delighted I  
was at this account of Fanny. ‘ By  
‘ Heaven! Cowfel,’ cried I, ‘ she is  
‘ the most beautiful creature I ever saw.’  
— ‘ She be,’ replied he; ‘ I allow it:  
‘ but remember this, Master Cowper,  
‘ you have rendered her a service; and,  
‘ if you take advantage of it to injure  
‘ her. —’ — ‘ I injure her! farmer,’ ex-  
claimed I. — ‘ No, no,’ continued he,  
‘ I don’t think you would designedly:  
‘ but, any how, it would be such a sin,  
“ I should hate you as much as I love  
‘ and respect you now.’ — ‘ Farmer,’  
said I, warmly, ‘ give me your hand;  
‘ and,

‘ and, if ever I injure her, may God  
‘ forsake me!’—‘ Said like yourself,’  
cried he, shaking my hand heartily;  
‘ said like the protector of innocence :  
‘ but now, my worthy young gentle-  
‘ man, take an old man’s advice in this  
‘ matter. I see you would not willingly  
‘ bite at the Devil’s hook ; but don’t  
‘ you now, don’t you trust yourself to  
‘ nibble at the bait : take my advice,  
‘ I say ; to the right about wheel ; go  
‘ back to London, and forget Fanny  
‘ Rofs.’—‘ Forget Fanny Rofs!’ I ex-  
claimed, ‘ I must first forget to see, to  
‘ hear, to feel, to breathe : tell me,  
‘ farmer, to forget all the functions of  
‘ life, but not to forget Fanny Rofs!’

“ Cowse! looked grave and was silent;  
but when I opened my mind to him,  
which I immediately did, he smiled, and  
told me I was too good for this world.  
‘ Fanny,’ said he, ‘ deserves you, and  
‘ I should

‘ I should be happy to see her your  
‘ wife ; but what will your friends say ?’  
— ‘ Farmer,’ replied I, ‘ as they don’t  
‘ know Fanny Ross so well as you and  
‘ I do, I don’t mean to ask them till, say  
‘ what they will, they can’t part us.  
‘ When we are married, they will find  
‘ out her worth ; but, if I say a word  
‘ before-hand, they will call me mad,  
‘ and my Fanny mean.’— ‘ They may  
‘ be mistaken though,’ said Cowper ;  
‘ for the girl, for aught I know, is as  
‘ well born as yourself. I knew her  
‘ poor father ; an industrious, broken-  
‘ hearted creature, that laid by all his  
‘ little scrapings together to teach his  
‘ daughter reading and writing, and  
‘ buy an annuity for her and her mo-  
‘ ther, in case of his death ; for he al-  
‘ ways said he should not live long.  
‘ Master Cowper, I am not for levelling  
‘ distinctions ; but this I must say, that,  
if I

‘ if I was the first lord in the land, and  
‘ you was my own and only son, you  
‘ should have my full consent to marry  
‘ Fanny; for I know her, I know every  
‘ string of her heart, and I know she  
‘ would make the man she marries  
‘ happy, be his station what it might.’

“ Finding in Cowfel sentiments like these, it was not difficult for me to make him my friend; but I was afraid of Dick, as I could hardly hope to make a friend of a rival. His father, however, put me at my ease, by telling me that his son’s heart was not made of stuff to be broke; but that, like the rest of Fanny’s lovers, he had, on rejection, directed the ardour of his passion to another object, with whom he was likely to be more successful. By convincing Cowfel of my disinterested and honourable views, I completely won his affection. He confessed he had warned her  
mother

mother against me, and had been the cause of Fanny's not continuing her inquiries for me at Thornbury; but that he would now be my friend with the old woman. 'Yet,' said he, 'there is one thing to be considered; you mayn't be independent of your friends; and, if they should be so displeased as to forsake you, how will you maintain a family?'—'They will never forsake me,' said I, 'for marrying Fanny Ross; but I have even thought how to provide against that. I have no ambition to be great: before I disclose my marriage I will, out of my income, put a sufficient sum into your hands to stock a good range of pasture; from you I will learn the care of cattle; and my Fanny and I will make cheese enough to feed all our little ones, and as many more.'—'God's blessing on you!' said he, smiling; 'it cheers my heart to hear  
you

‘ you talk so wisely. It is such a youth  
‘ as you that ought to be the husband of  
‘ Fanny Ross; and her husband you shall  
‘ be.’

“ I lost no time in improving the fortunate impression I had made on the farmer’s mind, but begged him to go with me immediately to her mother. We found our work already half done by the representations of her daughter; and Cowfel repeating my proposal and my plan, accompanied with his own hearty approbation, the preliminaries were soon settled. The banns were to be regularly published at the parish church; and that I might, as to residence, comply with the requisition of the law, Cowfel offered me a room in his house. This offer, you will believe, I readily accepted, and promised to become his inmate in the course of the week. I then took my leave, hastened to  
Berkley,

Berkley, threw myself into a post-chaise, and was in London early next day. My point was to obtain my father's permission to spend a month before I went to Cambridge with my friend at Marlborough, Ned Neville; you remember him at Cambridge, Aubrey? and it was no sooner asked than granted. He made me an offer of one of his servants; but I declined it, saying I preferred hiring one in the country. I packed up clothes and every thing which I thought I should want: nor did I forget books, maps, paper, pens, pencils, a good microscope, and several other optical instruments. I staid but one day in town, the next I spent in Berkshire with my sister, and the day following with my friend in Wiltshire. Knowing I could depend upon him, I made him my confident, and settled the channel of all correspondence and communication through his hands,

hands, so that there was no danger of my plan being detected. I then once more took my circuitous route to Berkeley; and, after an absence of five days, found myself most delightfully settled in a pleasant room, at the house of the friendly farmer."

Here Mr. Cowper pausing, Aubrey took the opportunity of ringing the bell, to order some refreshments; and, while Cæsar was gone for sweetmeats, cakes, and wine, Mr. Cowper desisted from his narrative, leaving an interval which the party filled up with observations on Fanny Ross's beauty and character, and on the picturesque scenery of her native village.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

*Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.*

AFTER a few minutes devoted to the repast brought by Cæsar, Mr. Cowper proceeded thus: "You have been very good to me, my friends; for, I confess, that, instead of remarks of the nature you have bestowed on my story, I expected some reflexions on the duplicity of my conduct towards an indulgent father."—"I think," said Aubrey, "that your own reflexions at the beginning were sufficient to divert all severity of censure."—"It left us nothing to say against you, Mr. Cowper," said Arthur: "I am sure you would never have deceived him, if

“ if he had made himself your friend as  
“ well as your father.”—“ You are  
“ right, my dear boy,” said Mr. Cow-  
per ; “ I should have been as incapable  
“ of veiling my heart from him as you  
“ from your father ; and, in meditating  
“ on my life, I am less severe on myself  
“ for a breach of filial confidence than  
“ for the act of duplicity itself ; all de-  
“ ceit, all hypocrisy, are offences of the  
“ blackest dye against the pure, grand  
“ Source of Truth. I early became so  
“ sensible of this, that the slightest want  
“ of candour appeared to me the chief  
“ badge by which we might distinguish  
“ those vicious spirits that are under the  
“ dominion of the Father of Falsehood :  
“ but it was not till I had severely felt  
“ the effects of it that I became alive to  
“ the horror with which it has ever  
“ since inspired me. I will not preach  
“ candour to you, my dear children, for  
“ you

“ you need no sermon on the subject;  
“ but, as you advance in life, you will  
“ invariably observe dissingenuousness to  
“ be the cement of misery and vice.  
“ To go on with my story :

“ My friendly farmer had employed the time of my absence not only in interesting his own family, but the whole parish in Fanny’s happiness and mine; and, to complete the acquisition of their good will, I went among the neighbours and made myself as agreeable to them as I possibly could; so that, when our names were proclaimed on the ensuing Sunday, the publication was heard throughout the congregation without surprise. As to the clergyman; you must know, that the vicar of Melford having been for some time in a very precarious state of health, had, by the advice of his physicians, gone on a voyage to a southern climate; and the curate  
who

who performed the duty of the parish was a young man, whose father lived at Berkley, and with whom, on a principle of frugality, he chose to reside. He did not know half of the parishoners; and the names of Charles Cowper and Frances Ross passed his lips with as much indifference as those of John Doe and Richard Roe issue from the mouth of a lawyer.

“ Every thing seemed to favour our union; and, as I already looked upon Fanny as my wife, I made the most of the intervening weeks in cultivating her ideas and talents: I considered her as a beautiful, unclassified wild-flower, that I was transplanting into the garden of MIND; and no florist ever took such delight in varying the streaks of his tulip, or in multiplying and enriching the petals of his carnation, as I in expanding the knowledge and cultivating the understanding

standing of my intellectual blossom. To teach those we love is a passion natural to the human breast; it is strongest in young minds, and even children we see possess it. I had learned much, and I had a great deal to learn; but I was sufficiently advanced to be Fanny's tutor; and, were I to recommend an improvement in the art of making love, it would be that it should commence with the lover's being the tutor of his mistress in the rudiments of some of the sciences.

“ Before our probationary weeks elapsed, my lovely pupil read the Spectator fluently, and seldom failed in the orthography of common words; but then, remember she had learned to read and write before. Nor did she alone profit by my affection for her: for the sake of prudent appearances, as well as friendship, Susan Cowfel was very often,

if not always with us; and Susan improved by my lectures: Susan was a good girl, and afterwards married and settled well. Her brother Dick and I soon became friends; and Dick too, I flatter myself, was not the worse for my conversation: but, to do justice to the whole parish, I must say that there was a something in the understanding and manners of its inhabitants which, like the countenance of their country, and the neatness of their village, exalted them in my mind. It was a something that clearly evinced a pervading influence of soul: the very villagers had a sober self-respect, unmixed with arrogance in their demeanour, a justness of thinking on the subjects to which their thinking extended, and a kindness in their manners that more than supplied the place of urbanity. I thought so then, and I never afterwards altered my opinion.

“ Struck with this effect, when the abatement of more vivid contemplations permitted it to recur to my mind, I was led to inquire for a cause, and I found a very natural one: for three successive generations, the parish of Melford had been blessed with vicars of a truly pastoral character; and the actual incumbent, whom the parishioners had in a body petitioned to yield to the advice of his physicians, and go abroad, to save his life and gain new health, was the successor of his father; for the presentation of the vicarage belonged to an elder branch of the family. The venerable vicar whom he succeeded had lived upwards of forty years among them: as he grew old, his son acted as his curate; and they had both, with apostolic sincerity and ardour, devoted themselves to the care of the souls entrusted to them. They did not confine their ministry to  
a cold

a cold reading of the Liturgy, and weekly common-place expositions of obscure texts ; they did not even deem preaching and praying their principal duty. The going to church they considered as periodical meetings for the purpose of general praise, thanksgiving, and supplication ; and the sermon as a lecture read by the father of a family : but they were far from considering it as the best opportunity of rectifying the understanding, improving the hearts, and forming the souls of their parishioners for salvation. The chief service they rendered them was through the means of friendly condescension and familiar talk. The doctrines of their Bible were not neatly put by to be neatly produced on set occasions ; but the precepts of their Master, his life, and death, the state of mankind, and the necessity of industry, were inculcated in private in



an easy, chearful manner; as a kind physician explains the nature of his friend's malady, and the qualities of the medicine which he prescribes for his restoration. They sowed the seeds of true religion and sound sense, without mixing the grains of enthusiasm. They evinced the interest of laying up a treasure in another life, from the certainty of leaving this; but, at the same time, inculcated honest employment in this as one of the means of amassing that treasure; and taught, that the excessive fervour which was unfavourable to temporal duties, was, in that very respect, unfavourable also to eternal hopes. In short, the inhabitants of Melford, their fathers and their children, had been so tutored by their amiable and estimable ministers, that the natural glow of the human mind, neither producing on the one hand an independent arrogance, nor,

nor, on the other, running into imaginary fervours and superstition, had formed, if I may so express myself, that humble dignity of soul which marked the character of my fellow-parishioners, and in which, I hope, they are not singular. But I digress, Aubrey, and usurp your province.”—“ The observation,” said Aubrey, “ conveys a reproach “ which I deserve ; but I mean to reform, Cowper : Oh ! that, instead of “ looking forward to Aubrey-Hall, I “ had early trod in the footsteps of the “ vicars of Melford ! but Mariton shall “ be another Melford.”—“ Bless you !” said Mr. Cowper, “ Mariton is one of “ the most fashionable places in the “ whole country.”—“ But pray, Mr. “ Cowper,” said Arthur-William, “ what became of Fanny Ross all this “ time ?” The whole group laughed at Arthur-William’s question. “ My

“ dear fellow,” said Mr. Cowper, delighted with his attention, “ she was making her wedding - clothes.” — “ Oh ! then,” cried Arthur-William, “ you are going to be married soon now !” — Mr. Cowper gazed at him fondly. Arthur-William’s present tense had in view the action of the story ; to Mr. Cowper it restored the actual prospect of unspent happiness. “ Dear boy !” said he, with an emotion which he subdued as it rose ; “ yes, our wedding-day approached ; and Fanny was busy in preparing her dress for the occasion.

“ I had brought from London with me some laces and muslins, of different patterns, to make her gowns, and some drawings of fashions to guide her in making them ; but, — oh ! how justly had nature framed her mind ! — though she admired them, she persuaded me to give

give up the idea of her becoming suddenly fine, and to allow her to choose herself what she should wear. It was the most modest, the most becoming dress I ever saw; it was plain, and not richer than that which her companion and bride-maid, Susan Cowfel, wore on the occasion: it is easily described, being merely a white gown, differing from her old ones only in the make, which she consented, at my request, to copy from the Grecian mode of one of my drawings. She wore a straw-hat, which, as well as her gown, was decorated with white ribbons; and, on her neck, was a coral necklace. I have already painted Fanny to you, and I shall now leave you to dress her in her bridal-garments; I shall only say, that the emotion of gratitude in her countenance was now unmixed with pain; another still more powerful auxiliary of

beauty had taken its place, and that was love attended with joy ; it beamed from her lips, it glistened in her eyes, it animated every motion. Artless, devoid of vanity, glowing with benevolent affections, my Fanny was the most beautiful creature I ever saw. Our wedding-day was a festival to the whole parish. Young Cowfel and his sister were the bride-man and bride-maid ; several handsome young women, clad in white, attended Fanny to church ; old Cowfel gave her away ; the curate blessed us, and the blessing was echoed from one end of the parish to the other. I was the happiest of human beings.

“ Soon after my marriage, it was necessary for me to return to town, and proceed to enter my name at Cambridge. I left Fanny under the care of her mother and Cowfel, and set out to take every precaution necessary for ensuring the concealment

cealment of my marriage, and the success of my plan. Instead of going directly to London, I went to Marlborough, in order to consult my friend Neville, who was also on the eve of going to the same university, the head of his family possessing the hereditary estate in an adjacent county. Having fully unboomed myself to Neville, he obtained his father's consent to proceed to town with me, on my promise to accompany him to his uncle's, and thence to college.

“ Old Mr. Neville having told his son that he meant to allow him a sum of money to furnish a library, I took advantage of this in London, to get from my father a sum for the same purpose. His disposition was very liberal, and he desired me not to be niggardly in the purchase of books. He was happy that I was to accompany Neville, and recom-

mended to me to make use of his connexions in establishing myself in the university; for, though he had purposed to accompany me, and introduce me to some friends in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, he preferred the opportunity which offered, both as it led to superior connexion, and saved him a jaunt for which he had but little time. When we took leave of him, he put a hundred pound bank-note in my hand, for my quarter's allowance, which he told me should be always paid in advance. He then gave me a draft on his banker for three hundred pounds, which he said was for my books when I was fixed. I was extremely grateful to my father for this liberality; and my gratitude was on the point of betraying my secret, when the effusion of it was checked by my recollection of the injunctions I had before received from him, which, you remember,

ber, were crowned with the hope of my finding a wife among the rich and the great. I contented myself, therefore, with thanking him warmly, and set out with Neville for Biggleswade, where we spent two days; and, on the third, were accompanied to Cambridge by his uncle, who recommended us to persons of influence.

“ We were fortunately settled together at Trinity, in rooms sufficiently commodious for us both, and the more so, as it was my intention to be as little at college as possible. As soon as we were left to ourselves, I digested my plan with Neville, whose friendship, which had hitherto veiled my clandestine happiness, was now to guard me in my blest obscurity. I told him, that I did not mean to devote one farthing of my three hundred pound draft to books; and he agreed, if ever my father should



come to Cambridge, to let his library pass for mine: he was also to be the channel of my correspondence with my family; and, if any friend of my father's unexpectedly called, he was to give some consistent account of my absence, and forward immediate intelligence to me. You may be sure I staid no longer at Trinity than was necessary to settle my plan: as soon as I had kept my first term, I shook hands with Neville, gave up Granta to the assiduities of mathematical geniuses and poetical imaginations, and flew on the wings of love to Melford.

“What a dream of happiness! nor was it very transient; it lasted—but I will not anticipate—it *was* happiness;—it now appears but a dream. I will not dwell upon it; but when I look back, even at this day, I think it was rational happiness. My time was chiefly spent  
in

in improving Fanny, and increasing my own knowledge; nor do I think I lost much by tutoring instead of being tutored. On my return to Melford, my thoughts were bent on securing some provision for Fanny, that should defy all caprice of temper or fortune; and, at the same time, I was determined that my family should receive her as my wife: but these were things that could not take place at once; and Fanny was not only convinced that it was better to delay making the confession, as I had stated to Cowfel, but wished it for another reason, which was, that it would render her fitter to converse with her sister-in-law: and, as for the honour of being noticed, it had never entered her head; for her views strayed not beyond the bounds of real happiness.

“ Meanwhile, to their great joy, I  
imparted

imparted to Fanny and her mother, and also to our friend farmer Cowfel, my intention of securing a lasting habitation at Melford, be my fortune in life what it might. Mrs. Ross's cottage stood on a little eminence, commanding such picturesque scenery, that I had, from the first moment of my certainty of Fanny's heart, cast my eyes upon it, as a spot to be improved and dedicated to love and happiness. With Cowfel's advice and assistance, I purchased it and about six acres of land round it. The purchase-money I paid after my next trip to Cambridge, when I returned with my second quarter's allowance and the cash for my father's draft, two hundred pounds of which I put into Cowfel's hands for my wife.

“ As we lived well upon the half of my income, for love can live well upon  
a little,

a little, I laid out four hundred pounds in extending our cottage and beautifying the ground about it. I did not scruple to take my father at his word, in respect to the sum for books, and, in one of my trips to Cambridge, I drew upon him for an additional two hundred pounds. Building, gardening, and mental cultivation, so occupied my Fanny and me, that the world was nothing to us, and we conceived all bliss to concentrate in loving, raising shrubs and flowers, laying out walks, contriving vistas, and enlarging and diversifying our ideas. In the first year our happiness was increased by the birth of a daughter. Here was a new sensation for us! to tell you what I felt on finding myself a father is impossible; and to you, Aubrey, would be needless. Fanny's feelings on becoming a mother were perhaps still more exquisite; and our little girl called forth in  
both

both of us those sweet sensations Nature kindles in the breasts of parents. We had her christened Frances. From the rapid progress of her cooing, smiling, and walking, in the first year of her life, we thought her a wonder, and we called her little Miracle.

“ It was when my child was about fourteen months old that my father informed me of his being advised to go and reside for some time in a more southern climate, and of his intention to take my sister with him : however, my plan of discovering my situation was not mature, and I suffered them to take leave of me, without breathing a word upon the subject. My father told me that my income should continue to be regularly paid ; but, at the same time, hinted to me, that he should not be sorry to hear that I was in the good graces of one of  
the

the Miss Nevilles, who were both girls of large fortune."

"I wonder," cried Arthur-William, "that he did not find you out before he went."—"So do I, Mr. Cowper," said Mrs. Aubrey; "for your old master at Thornbury must have known of your marriage; and one would think that he would have conceived it his duty to inform your father of it."—"I did not think of mentioning the lecture I received from him on the occasion," replied Mr. Cowper; "but he talked to me pretty roundly, I assure you. He did not, however, know of it till it was too late to interfere to any good purpose; and he was too rational not to see the propriety of my plan of temporary concealment: of course, he remained silent from a good motive."—"I cannot help wishing," said Arthur, "that your father had  
"known

“ known it before you parted.”—“ It is  
“ the wish of a pure heart,” said Mr.  
Cowper, “ and most devoutly do I now  
“ wish it too. What misery would it not  
“ have saved me ! You will perhaps pity  
“ me, my dear young friend, when you  
“ hear, as you will presently, how dearly  
“ I have expiated this want of candour.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

*Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.*

“ My father’s absence from England,” said Mr. Cowper, resuming his narrative, “ encreased the security of my secret, and I completely resigned myself to the full stream of happiness, so early my lot in life. Fanny, by the progress of her mind, daily improved her charms; and her delight in the tender offices of a mother endeared her more and more to my heart. Our little dominions flourished, the grounds were already clothed by the rising of the shrubs which we had planted, and, while our fruit-trees, our firs, willows, sycamores, and elms, were making their  
flower



flower progress, the protection of the walnut-trees and wild cherry furnished enough of the sublime of vegetable scenery to the cottage, which was now a commodious little habitation. To the original cot, I had added a simple building of two stories, with a bow in front, slightly curved; and to this building I had joined the counterpart of the original cot: the little wings were dedicated to bed-chambers and offices; and the middle was formed into a hall, parlour, and a room of considerable size up stairs. The architecture was rural, and our furniture useful, plain, and cheap. The outside of our habitation was picturesque: the curved centre appeared handsome, in white plaster between the two sides, which looked like bowers; jessamines, honey-suckles, and other luxuriant plants being trained every where about them; for Fanny had already  
ready

ready learned to delight in the bower of Adam and Eve."—"What! that," said Arthur-William, "where there was laurel and myrtle, roses and jasmines? Emily knows it by heart."—"Then," said Mr. Cowper, "she will repeat the lines for me, I know, to give my tongue a little rest." Emily, smiling at Arthur-William, and, calling him little rogue, repeated Milton's description:

"The roof

"Of thickest covert was inwoven shade  
"Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew  
"Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side  
"Acanthus and each od'rous bushy shrub  
"Fenc'd up the verdant walk; each beauteous  
    "flower,  
"Iris all hues, roses and jessamine,  
"Rear'd high their flourish'd heads between,  
    "and wrought  
"Mosaic; under foot the violet,  
"Crocus and hyacinth, with rich inlay,  
"Broider'd the ground."

"I thank

“ I thank you, my dear Miss Aubrey,” said Mr. Cowper, and then proceeded : “ There was in more respects than one similarity enough, at least in our ideas, between the dwelling of our first parents and that which we had made, to induce us to think it a Paradise, and we were inclined to give it the name, but that the heavenly title belonged to the whole district around us. We thought, however, that, allowing Melford to be Paradise, we might call our cottage Eden-bower, a name which it retains to this day.” — “ Who lives there now ?” said Arthur-William, who was the only one of the party that felt no reluctance in interrupting Mr. Cowper. — “ Let me see,” said Mr. Cowper ; “ who lives there now ? — We will ask Edmund to-morrow. In the mean time, suppose I tell you who was one of the most agreeable of its visitors at the time I was talking of. Soon after our  
little

little Fanny was born, Mr. Grey, the worthy vicar of Melford, returned with new health and vigour, and he and Mrs. Grey, for they had no family, resumed their residence at the vicarage. He had been punctually informed of all that passed in his parish. At first he thought proper to assume a reserve, indicative of displeasure, not only to us, but to Mr. Cowfel: but, after investigating the whole business, and informing himself of the life we led, he relaxed; and, having solemnly expressed his disapprobation of our clandestine proceeding, not only forgave us, but soon became attached to us.

“ Mrs. Grey, pleased with the improvement of my Fanny, and equally with her unaltered modesty and diffidence, called her her daughter, received her with affection, and presented her to her friends as her equal; while, in private,

vate, she lavished the highest encomiums on her, which, supported by a judicious account of the pretensions of her family, soon obtained her the notice of the vicar's friends. She mingled with genteel company as if she had been bred in it from her infancy ; and, before I left her to go abroad, the first duchess in the country would not have blushed to introduce her at court. But parade, and pomp, and fashion, were the last things that would ever have swayed her heart: her heart was at home ; it had taken root at Eden-bower, and there it delighted to expand. I was but too happy.

“ At length I received the fatal letter that called me from my paradise ; that was to awake me from my celestial trance. My father, in the most urgent terms, desired to see me without delay. I communicated the sad summons to Fanny, to Cowfel, and to the vicar.

The

The last advised me to obey it, and to find an opportunity of reconciling my father to my conduct; and he requested, at the same time, that I would carry from him a letter on the subject, which he hoped would have a good effect. Fanny wept, but assented to the necessity of my obedience. Cowfel begged, before I went, as I was now of full age,—I was three-and-twenty,—that I would have a regular settlement made of the property in his hands. As for me, grieved as I was to the heart, I was convinced that a short separation from Fanny was not to be avoided; and I soothed my misery with the thoughts of returning soon to her, either with my father and sister, or charged to carry her to them. I therefore resolved to do as Cowfel desired, and then to set off. The good vicar consented to be one of the trustees of the settlement; and, when I came to

collect the whole of my Fanny's fortune, I found it amount to an income which we could have been content upon all our lives, without any farther assistance from my father. Our expenditure, together with the improvement of Edenbower, had never exceeded two hundred a-year; and, three years having elapsed, we had, from the annual accumulation and my advance for books, a fund of eleven hundred pounds, besides our cottage and Fanny's tontine, which was fifteen pounds a-year; so that the whole of the income was seventy pounds, without rent to pay, and without reckoning the good Mrs. Ross's tontine, which was also fifteen pounds a-year, and which, since my marriage, had accumulated in her own hands. This view of a provision for my wife was a very pleasing reflexion, and helped to console me in the affliction I suffered from the thoughts of  
leaving

leaving her. The deed was soon prepared, and with inexpressible delight did I execute it. The trust was declared to purchase land, to be settled; first, on Fanny for her life, then on myself for my life, then to go to my children, share and share alike, with the exception of the cottage, which the smiles of my little Fanny won entirely for herself.

“ When I executed the deed, I took leave of the vicar and Cowfel, and determined to spend the next day alone with my family, as I had fixed to begin my journey the day after. What mingled sensations of pleasure and pain filled the remaining hours! The crisis was doubly anxious, as I knew that Fanny expected soon to be mother of another darling. Solicitous to relieve the oppression she saw me suffering, she made every effort to remove it. She observed, that I had it in my power to



make the separation a short one; that an explanation with my father was now desirable; that I should return and find little Fanny grown, playing with a brother or sister; and that my absence would open a new source of delight in the exertions of the imagination. In spite of these encouragements, I was heavy at heart: I was going to cross the sea; my father, though liberal, had never been open to me; and I recollected the matrimonial views he had several times suggested, not only in his conversation, but in his letters. It was in vain, however, to think thus: my trunks were prepared, the post-chaise came to the door, as it was ordered, early in the morning; but it was noon before I could be forced from the objects of my heart, and not till the vicar, calling at Edenbower to cheer the family, shamed me away. ‘Well, then, adieu!’ cried I,  
‘adieu!’

‘ adieu! To your care, Grey, I leave  
‘ her. Fanny, adieu!’

“ Never shall I forget the figure and countenance of my Fanny; the tears streaming from her blue eyes, while, unable to command the word, she waved her adieu with her handkerchief. Think —” Here Mr. Cowper paused.—“ No; it is for me to think,” continued he, “ for me to writhe, for me to weep!” He rose, and, breaking from the party, ran out of the room, followed by Aubrey.

## CHAPTER XX.

*The Danger of unguided Benevolence. An Effort of cautious Generosity.*

WHEN Mr. Cowper, overcome by the vivid images of his memory, flew from the Aubreys, the evening was considerably advanced. He had dwelt with more detail on the incidents of his story than he at first intended, by which he had increased the interest of it in the minds of the party: he had interspersed it with his observations; and had occasionally intermitted his narrative to hear the opinions of his friends, and to give his own; and the wing of Time had borne them so smoothly onward that his progress

progress was forgotten, and Arthur-William had unconsciously robbed Sleep a full hour of his usual tribute. He, as well as his brother and sisters, could have sat up all night to listen to the account of charming Fanny Rofs; and they were not a little disappointed when Aubrey returned to the room, and informed them that Mr. Cowper was gone home. "O—h!" a lengthened oh! proclaimed their regret; but, on their mother's observing the hour, and Aubrey's telling them that Mr. Cowper was to be with them the next evening, they were satisfied. "Well!" cried Arthur-William, yawning, "I'll go up to 'Sbid-likins: I dare say I shall dream of Fanny Rofs; shan't you, Arthur? If I do, I wish it may be kissing little Fanny on the sofa."—"How do you know she had a sofa, my love?" said Arthurina.—"I don't know," re-

plied he.—“ But I do,” said Emily:  
“ you remember mamma’s playing with  
“ you and kissing you on the sofa.”—  
“ So I do. But, mamma, what was  
“ the matter with Mr. Cowper? What  
“ made him cry so, and run away? Do  
“ you think we shall hear that Fanny  
“ Ross is dead?”—“ I am afraid so,” re-  
plied Mrs. Aubrey, “ though Mr. Cow-  
“ per has said nothing that makes it  
“ certain.”—“ I think, from his obser-  
“ vations,” said Arthur, “ that his grief  
“ rather arises from his reflexion on  
“ some part of his own conduct.”—  
“ It may be so,” said Aubrey; “ and,  
“ from hints that have fallen from him,  
“ I am inclined to think that her fate  
“ has been worse than death.”—“ How  
“ do you mean, papa?” cried Arthu-  
rina. —“ I mean, my love,” replied  
Aubrey, “ that her afflictions may have  
“ produced a derangement of mind.”—  
“ Poor

“ Poor Mr. Cowper ! ” exclaimed Emily. The whole family joined in pitying him ; and, after Arthur-William went to Mrs. Miller, another hour was spent in talking of Fanny Ross and Melford, and of the arrangement of the parsonage of Mariton, where rooms were appropriated for the visits of Mr. Cowper and the Smyths.

The next morning, just as the family had done breakfast, and were prolonging their chat, Cæsar delivered a letter to Aubrey, saying, the person who brought it was waiting below. Breaking the seal of the letter, Aubrey found its contents to be a few lines from Mr. Elton, which he read aloud :

“ My dear friend,

“ The bearer of this, Mr. M'Knucle,  
“ will explain to you the reason of my  
“ not breakfasting with you this morn-

H 5

“ ing,

“ ing, according to my engagement;  
“ and will deliver a message, the sub-  
“ ject of which, circumstances and want  
“ of time prevent my writing. I am,  
“ with the greatest esteem,

“ Yours sincerely,

“ JOHN ELTON.

“ Thursday Evening.”

Mrs. Aubrey and the young people went up to Mrs. Miller, and Aubrey to Elton's messenger. He was a short, thick-set, red-faced man, in a shabby blue coat, red waistcoat, and fustian breeches; his stockings were grey worsted, ribbed, and in his shoes were large pewter buckles. “ You come from  
“ Mr. Elton,” said Aubrey.—“ Indeed I  
“ do,” replied M'Knucle, “ and I was  
“ to have been here in time last night by  
“ dark, to have prevented him the dis-  
“ grace of sleeping at my cousin Mr.  
“ James

“ James M’Knucle’s ; but I knew he  
“ gave it me in time to be too late ;  
“ so I promised him to come with all  
“ speed, on condition he would make up  
“ his mind to my not coming back last  
“ night before this morning ; so I went  
“ to bed, and the first thing I did as  
“ soon as I got up out of my warm bed  
“ was to come strait from my lodging  
“ in Russel-court, through Covent-Gar-  
“ den, to carry your honour to your  
“ friend.”—“ I really do not under-  
“ stand you,” said Aubrey.—“ And  
“ that’s surprising now,” said M’Knucle,  
“ for I never spoke plainer in all my  
“ life, in a genteel way ; for I would not  
“ go to tell you plump-dash, in an open  
“ manner, that my uncle and me ar-  
“ rested your friend yesterday morning  
“ in his bed.”—“ Oh ! I understand  
“ you now,” said Aubrey ; “ Mr. El-  
“ ton is in jail then.”—“ And indeed



“ he is not,” replied M<sup>c</sup>Knucle; “ so  
“ that whether I spake jonteelly, or can-  
“ didly, it’s all one with your understand-  
“ ing. I tell you once more that Mr.  
“ Eelton, your friend, is in Carey-street,  
“ at my uncle’s: every body knows  
“ Mr. James M<sup>c</sup>Knucle’s.” — “ A  
“ spunging-house, perhaps?” said Au-  
brey. — “ Fait!” said M<sup>c</sup>Knucle, grin-  
ning, “ and that sure enough is the  
“ name given to my uncle’s castle by  
“ some people: but that’s an English-  
“ Irish bull; for, don’t spungers go to  
“ an open house? When did you ever  
“ hear of spunging at a lock-up house?”  
— “ Now then,” said Aubrey, “ that  
“ I do understand Mr. Elton is in  
“ your uncle’s custody, pray what is his  
“ message to me?” — “ Message!” cried  
the bailiff’s follower with surprise;  
“ why that; and I was to show you the  
“ way.” — “ The way is easily found,”  
said

said Aubrey, "and I will not rob you of  
" your time."—"As for the way," re-  
plied M'Knucle, "that's aisyly found  
" sure enough, every body knows Mr.  
" James M'Knucle's; but, as to rob-  
" bing me of my time, I beg your ho-  
" nour's pardon there; you can't do  
" that, for I have sold it to your friend,  
" fait, and for a very good price, and so  
" it is at your service, without any rob-  
" bery at all."—"Very well," said  
Aubrey, "but I will not detain you."—  
"Very well, your honour!" returned  
the catchpole; "and I'll tell your friend  
" that you'll be with him in a jiffy; and  
" so Paddy M'Knucle wishes your ho-  
" nour a good night." Saying which  
he nodded his head, and made his exit.

Aubrey was the less surpris'd at the  
scene between the bailiff and himself, as  
Mr. Cowper's account of Elton had in  
some measure prepared him for it: he  
had

had considered the check given to him as thrown into the fire, and he did not expect ever to see or hear of him more. But now his errors, by degrees, were lost in the magnitude of his misfortune: the horror of a prison was a punishment that exceeded the desert of negligent dissipation; and Aubrey, in whose bosom resentment has been observed to possess less force than perhaps is both necessary and laudable, thought no more of the deceit he had practised on himself, or, rather, endeavoured to palliate it. Clear it was, that the breaking of his appointment was the effect of necessity; he had been arrested, and therefore could not come: he might not have thought it prudent to send the balance of the check; and, if Elton should even desire to see him to request to use the whole for his liberation, it would be but natural. At first, while talking with M<sup>r</sup>Knucle,  
he

he had intended not to go to him ; but, on reflexion, he deemed it right to inquire about the check ; and felt, besides, that he was now morally bound to go, as he had suffered his messenger to return without putting a negative to the unauthorised answer he had framed, and from which Elton would undoubtedly expect to see him. He therefore resolved to consider it as an engagement, and to keep it ; and, staying only to relate the affair to Mrs. Aubrey, he went after Paddy M'Knucle in about half an hour.

In his way to Carey-street, he meditated on the situation and character of Elton ; and laid a plan for his reformation. He persuaded himself that it was an opportunity thrown in his way by Providence, to begin a reform of his own neglect of his professional duties : he resolved to proceed by testifying a  
dispo-

disposition to serve him ; by gently reproving the fabrication of Winfield and his family ; by devoting the amount of Sensitive's check to his liberation ; and by endeavouring, in a friendly, warm manner, to impress upon his mind a sense of the folly and sinfulness of artifice, and the consequence of it both here and hereafter. Glowing with the virtue of his intention ; for virtue in design being virtue in fact, the conscious mind receives its reward, even though the malign influence of the evil spirit should interrupt its execution. Aubrey, glowing with the noble design of saving a soul, and revolving the arguments dictated by Reason and Piety, knocked at the door of the spunging-house.

It was opened to him by his new acquaintance, Paddy M'Knucle. " Well friend," said Aubrey, " you see I have not been long after you."—

" And,

“ And, upon my soul,” replied M’Knucle, “ that’s no fault of mine ; and I  
“ wish from the bottom of my body  
“ you had staid at home.” Aubrey,  
to avoid the troublesome loquacity of  
the bailiff, made an effort to go in, say-  
ing, “ I want Mr. Elton.”—“ And in-  
“ daid !” said the man, without moving  
from the door ; “ you must seek him  
“ elsewhere then.”—“ What do you  
“ mean ?” cried Aubrey, surprised.—  
“ Why I main,” replied M’Knucle,  
“ that he is not here.”—“ Not here !  
“ then pray why did you give me the  
“ trouble of coming ?”—“ I’ll tell your  
“ honour,” answered he ; “ for I see  
“ you are a jontleman, and will be above  
“ casting blame on Paddy M’Knucle,  
“ who is as innocent of the trouble he  
“ has given you as your honour’s own  
“ soul. But, before I up and tell you,  
“ you

“ you must come in and sit down a bit,  
“ for it will take a while to talk.”

Aubrey was now too curious to learn the particulars of Elton's sudden release, not to sacrifice some time and some feeling to obtain the account; and he went into the passage: the door was immediately double-locked by M'Knuck, who then conducted him to a back-room, desiring him, at the same time, not to be uneasy at being locked in, for that there was some good company in the parlours, who would give their ears to get out as easily as he should. “ And now that I have got your honour's private ear,” said he, “ I could tell you a few names, and let you a little into some histories that surprised Paddy M'Knucle himself, till he got used to 'em.” — “ Now, my good fellow,” said Aubrey, “ consider that I am in a hurry.” — “ And fait! so I will,”

“ will,” replied M’Knucle : “ then  
“ you must know, it’s all a bull of Mr.  
“ Eelton’s own ; for, if he had a told  
“ me that the other jontleman would  
“ have been here last night, I should  
“ never have thought of coming to you  
“ this morning. Now I’ll tell you the  
“ whole matter, just as it happened.  
“ My uncle Jemmy no sooner got the  
“ writ, which gave him a power over  
“ the body of your worthy friend, than  
“ he set me about tracing and watching  
“ him with all my might ; and fait ! wid  
“ all the jontleman’s cunning, for he is  
“ no young fox, I soon found out his  
“ cover ; and, when I had safely lodged  
“ him, I takes my uncle to the spot,  
“ and so we nabbed him. When he  
“ looked at the writ, ‘ Oh ! jontle-  
“ men,’ said he, addresssing his spaich  
“ to me and my uncle, ‘ this is a paice  
“ of malice : the money shall be paid :

“ I



“ I have only to write to a friend ; will  
“ one of you carry the letter ? I’ll re-  
“ ward you like a gentleman.’ With  
“ that my uncle consented to stay with  
“ your friend till I brought back an  
“ answer : so he writes a long epistle,  
“ and sends me away to the top of Pic-  
“ cadilly wid it; and there I left the letter  
“ sure enough, and came back with  
“ this answer, that the jontleman was  
“ gone out till he came back to dinner,  
“ when he would send an answer for  
“ himself. So there was no help for it;  
“ and here he came, and here he dined  
“ like a jewel of a prince. ‘ But, ho !’  
“ says he, ‘ I must not have the dis-  
“ grace to sleep in confinement.’ So, after  
“ dinner, he says to me, ‘ M’Knucle,’ says  
“ he, ‘ I have another friend that would  
“ come and do the business, though I  
“ would radher have the todder ; but it  
“ grows late, and I am resolved not to  
“ sleep

“ sleep here to-night.”—Says I, ‘ You  
“ must make haste then ; for, mind you,  
“ our doors and your suppers don’t  
“ keep the same hours.’ With that he  
“ writes a short letter ; that little bit of  
“ a thing I brought to you, you know,  
“ and gives it me, and says, ‘ M’Knu-  
“ cle ! here’s a guinea for you, and a  
“ letter ; the guinea you may give to  
“ Lucy M’Gra, if you like ;’—for he had  
“ made me drink sweet Lucy’s health  
“ in a bumper, so he came to know she  
“ was christened Lucy M’Gra :—‘ and  
“ as for the letter,’ says he, ‘ you must  
“ manage cleverly for me—you must  
“ first go again to Piccadilly ; if Mr.  
“ ——’ oh, devil burn the pretty name  
“ if I can remember it, but it’s all one :  
“ —‘ if that there jontleman is coming,  
“ then bring this little letter back ; if  
“ he is not come home, then mind and  
“ carry this to Albemarle-street, number  
“ —’

“ —’—hut, I forget your number—  
“ there tell my friend Daubry where I  
“ am, and bring him to me.’—‘ Oh!  
“ devil burn me,’ says I, ‘ but I’ll do this  
“ affair to a t; but, by my soul! Mr.  
“ Eelton, it is too late for the excursion;  
“ but, howsomdever, set your heart at  
“ rest; Paddy M’Knucle will manage it  
“ some way or other to your heart’s con-  
“ tent.’ So I left him, and went strait  
“ to my lodgings, after I had taken a sup  
“ at the little Bacchus riding upon the  
“ big barrel; for, says I to myself, ‘ what  
“ signifies your going all the way to Pic-  
“ cadilly to-night, becaze, if Mr. Eel-  
“ ton’s friend comes in time, he is off  
“ already; and, if he does not come in  
“ time, why it’s too late for me to fetch  
“ eidher of ’em in time before to-  
“ morrow morning. And wasn’t this  
“ fair raifoning now? I’ll be judgt by  
“ yourself. And was I a magician, or a  
“ witch

“ witch of Endor, to detect that Mr.  
“ ———, the Piccadilly jontleman, was,  
“ true enough, on his way to Mr. James  
“ M’Knucle’s; and that, before I turned  
“ in, or began to amuse my imagination  
“ with the thought of draiming of my  
“ sweet Lucy M’Gra, Mr. Eelton was  
“ capering about London town wher-  
“ ever he pleased? Was I, laying sound  
“ a-slaip in Russel-court, to draim of  
“ Mr. Eelton’s good luck, and not of  
“ my own sweet Lucy M’Gra?”—“ I  
“ thank you, Mr. M’Knucle,” said Au-  
brey, who, though entertained with this  
new rhapsody, had no inclination to pro-  
long his pleasure: “ I find that Mr. El-  
“ ton was released last night by the in-  
“ terference of another gentleman, and  
“ I only wish now to know the name of  
“ his friend: Can you recollect it?”—  
“ Burn me! my dear,” replied he, “ but  
“ I have a very good memory for faces,  
8 “ though

“ though not for names; for my business, do you see, lies more in descriptions and keys than names of strangers.” Here he was called by a loud voice. “ Oh! how you are lucky!” continued he to Aubrey; “ that’s Mr. James M’Knucle himself; and to be sure he can’t tell you the name without mentioning it, when he has got it down written on a paper.” Saying which he opened the door, and no sooner put his head out than he popped it back again, and, with a wink and nod, whispered Aubrey that he “ might now ax the jontleman himself; for, fait! here he was with his uncle.”

They advanced; and Aubrey with pain, but not surprise, saw Sensitive. “ Ha!” cried the latter, “ who should have thought of seeing you here?”—“ I am returning westward,” said Aubrey; “ shall I wait for you?”—“ If  
“ you

“ you will walk slowly to the end of  
“ the street,” replied Sensitive, “ I  
“ will overtake you ; my business is  
“ very short, but requires privacy.”—  
“ Certainly,” returned Aubrey ; “ but  
“ perhaps you will not think it neces-  
“ sary to be very delicate on this occa-  
“ sion, when I tell you that I came  
“ myself to see Elton.” On this Sen-  
sitive made no scruple to transact the  
business in his presence ; and Aubrey,  
recollecting Mr. Cowper’s conversation  
respecting him, saw with mingled sorrow,  
affection, and pity, Sensitive redeem  
the obligation which he had entered into  
the evening before, to procure Elton’s  
release, by paying down cash to the  
amount of two hundred pounds.

Aubrey’s emotion was not unattended  
with admiration ; for he was not one of  
those who thought that imprudence to-  
tally changed the nature of generosity ; or

that the weakness of heart which induces a man to forget his own interest for the pleasure of relieving others was contemptible. It originated at least in the source of virtue; and, though the stream spent itself by taking a course over quicksands, the clearness, the purity of it was never lost while a drop remained in its channel. His affection for Sensitive was increased by what he saw, and his anxiety to save him augmented in proportion; he therefore resolved to take the freedom of a friend, and the privilege of an older man, in using this occurrence as the foundation of a mild warning. As they walked homewards he divulged Elton's situation and loss of virtue, and made him acquainted with the fabrication of the distresses of Winfield's family, and the fate of his own check; and, with the warmth of a father, entreated him to be more careful in  
the

the disposal of his means of doing good. Sensitive, impressed by his affectionate manner, far from being hurt at the liberty he had taken, thanked him cordially, and assured him that he would be more upon his guard.

They spent the rest of the morning together; in the course of which they strolled into the auction-room, and were gratified to find the exhibition of Aubrey's pictures still crowded with company. In his way home, after parting with Sensitive, Aubrey met Mr. Goodground, for the first time since he had received his admonitory epistle, which was delivered with Sensitive's generous one. "I thought, sir," said Goodground, "that I should have seen you, or heard from you, on my letter."—"It was not much calculated," Mr. Goodground," replied Aubrey, "to encourage a hope of deriving the



“ assistance I wanted, from any further  
“ discussion of my situation.”—“ Oh!  
“ pardon me, sir,” said Goodground,  
“ there is no man alive more ready to  
“ assist his friends, when assistance can  
“ be of real service. I am glad, sir, to  
“ see so valuable a collection of pic-  
“ tures at Mr. Flourish’s rooms : I have  
“ not a doubt they will produce a con-  
“ siderable sum ; and, if you assure me  
“ that it will more than cover all your  
“ debts, come and take a beef-steak  
“ with me to-day, and you shall have  
“ the two hundred pounds on your note  
“ of hand. I love generosity, Mr.  
“ Aubrey ; but you will allow that it  
“ should go hand in hand with pru-  
“ dence.”—“ Certainly,” replied Au-  
brey ; “ and, as I am engaged to-day,  
“ you will save your beef-steak ; nor am  
“ I any longer in want of the two hun-  
“ dred pounds.”—“ I am glad to hear  
“ it,

“ it, my dear Mr. Aubrey, heartily glad  
“ to hear it. Good day—no man alive  
“ more anxious to serve his friends.”—  
“ *Prudently,*” added Aubrey.

After dinner, Aubrey related the occurrences of the morning to his family ; and they were still commenting upon them when they heard a rap at the door, which Arthur-William guessed to be Mr. Cowper's,

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.*

THE guests was a good one ; it was Mr. Cowper's knock, and he was presently announced. He was cordially welcomed by the family-party ; and Arthur-William ran up and shook hands with him. He apologized for his precipitate retreat the preceding night, and promised to behave better as he proceeded in his narrative. After a little general chat, finding, from the countenances of the party, that they were anxious for the continuation of his history, he did not keep them long in suspense.

“ I hope,” said he, “ that my reflexions since I ran from you, will enable  
ble

ble me to keep my promise of behaving better to-night: yet, alas! I have hitherto related to you nothing but venial errors and a flow of happiness; whereas, the sequel of my story is made up of damning crimes, punishments condign, and misery extreme: but hear me out. After a fatiguing journey of three days, I arrived at Falmouth, where I found the Lisbon packet heaving anchor. I hastened on board, and, in an hour's time, she was under way. By the pilot I sent a few lines a-shore, to be put into the post for my Fanny, informing her of the haste with which I embarked, and promising to write by the first opportunity after I landed in Portugal. The wind blowing from the north, soon wafted us across the bay of Biscay. Sailing down the coast of Portugal, we hailed a coasting pilot off the Duero, a considerable distance at sea; and another

gentleman and myself engaged her to carry us and our luggage to Oporto, where, after beating off and on some hours at the mouth of the river waiting the tide, we were safely landed.

“ I need hardly describe the town to you ; you know that it gave name to the whole kingdom, that it is a bishop's see, and next to Lisbon, the richest and most populous town in Portugal. It is built on the declivity of a steep mountain, and the streets are of course very uneven ; but it is in general handsome ; well paved, and by far the cleanest city in the kingdom : the fine quay extends along the river from one end of the town to the other. The interspersion of trees and vines give it a very agreeable appearance ; and the grand inequality of the face of the country adding the sublime to the beautiful, I was struck with rapture when I first beheld the scene.

scene. On landing I hastened to my father's house, where I was received by him and my sister with the warmest affection. The latter, lively and handsome, was little altered from what she was when we parted: she was rather taller, had something of a foreign air, and spoke Portuguese and French fluently. But, in my father, there was a visible change: it was not, however, a decline of health; his person retained its strength, but the lines of his face were grown deep, his brow lowered, and his spirits, as I learned from my sister, had entirely failed him for some time past.

“ The very day I arrived he took me apart to speak to me on the subject which had made him so urgent with me to come to Oporto; but, before he entered upon it, he inquired what connexions I had formed, and whether I had yet engaged the affections of any

woman of fortune. Had he not looked so sadly, and had I not been afraid of adding to the oppression I saw him suffering, I would have taken this opportunity of divulging the secret of my marriage; but, when I looked in my father's face, I found my resolution give way, and I determined to postpone my confession till I consulted with my sister; I therefore evaded his questions as well as I could, and yielded to the guilt of equivocation in telling him that I had never yet met with a woman of fortune who had power to engage my affections. He said he was sorry for it; for that he had set his heart upon my connecting myself in a way to provide greatly for a family, which was not to be done with a middling fortune without connexions. 'However, my dear Charles,' said he, 'you are young, and may succeed yet, only let me say the sooner the better: but,

‘ but, for the present, we must turn our  
‘ thoughts to your sister. Harriet has  
‘ her share of beauty ; I have for a good  
‘ while past had in my eye several  
‘ wealthy men for her, and two have  
‘ even offered themselves ; one a native,  
‘ and the other an Englishman, in the  
‘ highest commercial line : but she is  
‘ nice—I am afraid too nice : it is, how-  
‘ ever, absolutely necessary that she  
‘ should marry ; for I do not feel as I  
‘ did, Charles ; and Heaven knows my  
‘ life may last very little longer. Now,  
‘ she says she will never marry a fo-  
‘ reigner, and the merchant is not to her  
‘ taste. But I am the less afflicted on  
‘ this account, as it appears to be in her  
‘ power to make a good match, and she  
‘ does not seem averse to it : no doubt,  
‘ those marriages are the most fortunate  
‘ where interest and inclination concur.  
‘ About three months ago, a young  
‘ 16 ‘ man,



‘ man, named Smyth, arrived here, attended by French servants. He came  
‘ from France, through Spain, to Lisbon, thence to this place ; and it seems  
‘ to have been his intention merely to look at Oporto, and continue his travels ; but, accidentally meeting Harriet at the consul’s, he changed his  
‘ plan, and has remained here ever since. When he came he brought  
‘ only a letter from Lisbon for the consul ; but, since his stay, he has received  
‘ many & introduction, from various quarters, to the principal people here,  
‘ and one of credit to a great extent from London to a principal merchant.  
‘ In short, I have no doubt of his being a man of fortune ; but I have a doubt  
‘ of another kind, which it behoves us to solve without delay : I suspect his  
‘ views to be dishonourable. His habit is sanguine, his expression ardent,  
‘ and

and his knowledge of the world  
considerable; yet, while he attends to  
Harriet with the assiduity of a lover,  
not a word have I heard on the subject  
of wedlock. The continuation of his  
attentions will be an injury to your sister,  
if the end of them be not ascertained;  
and, if marriage be his view,  
it cannot, in my opinion, take place  
too soon. I have therefore sent for  
you to assist me in managing this affair;  
for I confess to you I do not wish  
it broke off.

“ On hearing my father’s reasons for  
calling me to Oporto, I could not blame  
him; and, to be the guardian of my  
sister’s honour and happiness, was a  
thought so pleasing to me, that it made  
some amends for the painful one of the  
distance I was from the darlings of my  
heart. I told my father that I was sure  
my sister would open her mind to me,  
and

and that I had little doubt of soon discovering Smyth's. Harriet was as candid as I expected. In the first conversation I had with her alone, which was in about an hour after that I had had with my father, she frankly told me all that had passed between her and her admirer. Smyth had professed the most ardent passion for her, and had used every means in his power to excite a return: he had even talked of marriage to her, but in a way that did not warrant her mentioning it to my father. He had wild notions respecting it, and had told her that she was the only woman he had ever seen who could make him think of it for a moment; but he had never directly made the offer. 'And how, ' Harriet,' said I, 'did you answer him ' when he talked in this way?'—'By ' carelessly thanking him for his compliment,' said she, 'and professing a  
' pre-

‘ preference for a single life.’—‘ But  
‘ pray, Harriet,’ said I, ‘ how does your  
‘ heart stand affected ?’—‘ Pleased with  
‘ his passion,’ replied she ; ‘ and would  
‘ not break at his desertion.’—‘ And  
‘ have you given him any ground to be-  
‘ lieve that he is agreeable to you ?’—  
‘ Is not permitting his admiration,’ re-  
plied she, ‘ giving some ground ?’—  
‘ But did he ever take any liberty with  
‘ you ?’—‘ At the house of Donna Se-  
raphina de Monocella, a beautiful  
‘ Portuguese, to whom you will be in-  
‘ troduced, he has more than once  
‘ compelled me to check him with a  
‘ violence which I meant at the time  
‘ should produce a lasting breach ; but  
‘ his intreaties, and Donna Seraphina’s  
‘ persuasions, have prevented it.’ I told  
Harriet that she had been imprudent in  
giving him a second opportunity ; but  
that, as I found he was agreeable to her,  
I would

I would at a proper time speak to Smyth; and that I did not doubt, if she would be conducted by me, to see them soon married; to which she answered with proper pride that she was in no hurry to be married, and that she should never break her heart for any man.

“ Smyth, having been made to expect me, thought it proper to pay me a visit as soon as he heard of my arrival. I found him a handsome fellow, six feet high, well proportioned, and of a graceful mien. His eye was vivacious, quickly changing its object, except when fixed by the magic of beauty; but I could not help thinking, from the first moment I saw him, that his countenance bespoke a designing heart. We entered into familiar chat, and he undertook to be my *cicerone* through Oporto. As we walked, he leaned on my arm with a

friendly ease; and I soon found, from his conversation, that he was a libertine, and that he expected to find me one. He spoke slightly of the Portuguese women in general, but dwelt with rapture on the charms of Donna Seraphina de Monocella, whom he described as possessing the elegant mould of the English, together with the *piquante tournure* of the Portuguese. ‘In short,’ said he, ‘she is the most bewitching beauty I know, one excepted. She speaks English and French as well as she does Portuguese: but then she is such a prude. That’s her house—shall I present you to her now?’

“Before I had time to utter a negative, he rang the door-bell, saying; ‘if Seraphina receives us in her dishabille, you are a lost man; for it is in her undress she is most irresistible.’ The door was opened by an English footman, whom

whom he asked if Don Alvarez de Monocella was at home? and being informed that he was not, desired to know if Donna Seraphina was visible; on which we were shown into an elegant saloon till he could let us know.

“ We were soon summoned to Donna Seraphina’s boudoir, where almost every thing that could give the least assistance in seducing the senses seemed to be collected. The room, which was lofty and well-proportioned, though not large, was hung with rose-coloured silk, divided into feigned pannels by broad fine lace, reaching to about three feet from the floor. The lower compartments of the walls were filled with beautiful mythological figures; Cupids, Venus and the Graces, groups of nymphs, and various others. Curtains of a pale straw-coloured persian, fringed with silver, hung in rich festoons round the windows. The  
furni-

furniture of the chairs and sofas was of the same colour, but made of damask. The tables were of beautiful satin-wood, that reflected the objects over them. The middle divisions of two of the panels on each side of the room, conveniently situated at the elbows of the sofas, were filled with books, elegantly bound; between these were broad mirrors, in superb frames, fixed over the sofas. The ceiling of the room was a clear azure, that rivalled the sky; and on the floor was stretched a fine green baize, to emulate the verdure of spring. On the magnificent marble chimney-piece, supported by Caryatides, stood an elegant clock, and flower-vases, containing roses and myrtles in bloom, which cast an agreeable odour through the air. A piano-forte, a fine harp, and stands for music and for drawings, completed the furniture of this elegant boudoir.



boudoir. On one of the sofas lay a Spanish guitar, with some songs and coloured drawings, carelessly intermixed. On entering, I was struck with the beauty of this finished piece of artificial taste : but, though I was delighted, I could not help comparing with it the simplicity and nature of Eden-bower ; and I preferred—yes, my mind was still pure enough to prefer the latter.

“ Donna Seraphina allowed me some minutes to contemplate her beautiful apartment before she made her appearance ; and I had just taken up a Portuguese song from the sofa, when my attention was called to the other side of the room by the opening of a door in the corner-pannel, which I had not perceived. Donna Seraphina advanced, and the simplicity of her dress formed a contrast to the artful combination of her apartment. She had on a simple, white  
linen

linen garment, which was gathered about her waist by a sash; and her head was bound with a light blue muslin handkerchief, tied behind. Simple as was her dress, however, it was a result of the nicest art; and the mode of it, which was in the Grecian style, was perfectly adapted to display her shape and the symmetry of her limbs. Her face was exquisitely handsome: her eyes were either vivacious or tender, at her command; her smile graceful beyond expression. But I will not be more particular in my description; suffice it to say, she was a most beautiful woman, about five-and-twenty years old. She came forward with a smile; and, on Smyth's presenting me, welcomed me to Oporto in a most flattering manner, and altogether gave me a reception that made a deep impression on me. She spoke to me in English; and the slight deviation of accent,

cent, by which I could just distinguish the foreigner, rendered the language but the more agreeable to my ear. She had a gaiety and ease in her manners, at that time of day not much known in our country, and which to an Englishman, so little acquainted as I was with foreign society, were fascinating in such a woman as Donna Seraphina de Monocella. She started subjects, talked fluently on them, took up her guitar without being asked, and gave me a specimen of the Portuguese song, with one of the most melodious voices I ever heard. But what flattered me most, and most captivated me, was the riveting of her eyes upon me, insinuating into my unpractised heart that she was more than commonly prepossessed in my favour. Dare I own it to you? Such an attack on one ignorant of the arts of coquetry was irresistible: I had not been a week at Oporto  
—I blush

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—I blush even at this distance of time for my depravity—I had not been three days at Oporto; before my magnet of Eden-bower lost its power of attraction: Fanny—how shall I speak it!—seldom engaged my thoughts; and, in the course of a fortnight, I was so completely fascinated that, without a single struggle, I devoted myself to the passion inspired by Donna Seraphina.”

“ Oh, Mr. Cowper, Mr. Cowper!” cried Arthur, shuddering.—“ My dear “ young friend,” said Mr. Cowper, “ I “ am more pleased than mortified at “ your emotion. I have that to relate “ which will ensure me your forgiveness; but your shuddering at a crime “ is a pledge to your parents, to your “ friends, to yourself, of the rectitude “ of your own mind, and of the stability of your virtues: yet my example “ is not a useless lesson; there are Sera-  
“ phinas

“ phinas in England; you will now  
“ easily detect them, and not only be  
“ upon your guard yourself, but may  
“ serve a friend by describing the Se-  
“ raphina of Cowper.” While Mr.  
Cowper was speaking to Arthur, Arthur-  
William went round to his mother,  
and, keeping his eyes fixed on him, said,  
in a whisper, loud enough to be heard by  
all the party: “ Mamma, I hate Mr.  
“ Cowper !”—“ You are right, my  
“ little fellow,” said Cowper; “ I should  
“ be sorry if you did not hate me at  
“ this moment; but you too shall for-  
“ give me by and by.”

“ Donna Seraphina,” continued he,  
resuming his narrative, “ introduced me  
to her husband, Don Alvarez, who was  
considerably older than herself, and who,  
with all the politeness of a fashionable  
husband, was as devoid of jealousy. He  
had gradually become insensible to Sera-  
phina’s

phina's charms; and was at this time under the influence of another attachment, that disposed him to pay less attention to her conduct. Being on the most intimate terms with my father and sister, as well as with Smyth, they both requested me to consider myself always at home in their house; and I promised to make frequent use of the *entrée* bestowed upon me; a promise I but too faithfully kept; for, after the first fortnight, I was more there than at my father's. Smyth, villain that he was, had not only foreseen, but planned my infatuation, and he was instigated by the most abominable motives. By plunging me into a vicious amour with a married woman, he flattered himself so to corrupt my soul that I should set female virtue at nought, and even be brought to conduce to his dishonourable designs upon my sister. I soon, how-

ever, convinced him of his mistake. Donna Seraphina did not appear in my eyes the character he intended I should see. So pure was my heart, that had I supposed her devoid of virtue, I should have been in no danger: I was the more alive to her charms, and to the enjoyment of the interest I had excited in her heart, by connecting with them the superiority of her mental faculties and the delicacy of her sensibility. My crime at first consisted in forgetting, or rather not thinking of the sacred situation in which Donna Seraphina stood, and in overlooking my own. When Smyth, therefore, displayed his libertine notions, he but the sooner roused me to the care of Harriet's innocence and peace of mind, and I resolved to bring his courtship to an immediate conclusion one way or the other.

“I frankly

“ I frankly told my sister that I thought Smyth would not make a good husband, and I advised her to overcome the preference she seemed to have for him ; but, at all events, to put an end to the uncertainty of his views. In a consultation with my father the very day after I arrived, and before I had resigned myself to the idolatry of Donna Seraphina, it was agreed that I should report I had brought an invitation for my sister from a friend, to return with me to England on a visit ; and, if it produced no decisive declaration from Smyth, I was in fact to carry her away. The scheme was successful. Smyth saw that he had no hope but in marriage, and, being too deeply enamoured of Harriet to let that prevent his obtaining her, declared himself. When I spoke on the subject to him, he made some awkward excuses, with a countenance of cha-



grin for not being more explicit; and having obtained my sister's consent to their union, he pressed the immediate celebration of their marriage with such earnestness and disinterested ardour, that my father concurred, and, in the third week after my arrival at Oporto, they were married by the chaplain of the factory with due solemnity, and every requisite authority.

“ That he was a man of fortune, I told you had been previously ascertained by my father, who, I afterwards found, privately stipulated with Smyth, that the receipt of Harriet's portion should be delayed till after his death: to which Smyth had agreed, as it obviated the necessity of a settlement. Love, and the agreeable life they led, united to induce the married couple to remain some time at Oporto. They appeared to be very happy; and Smyth's friendship

ship for me seemed to increase with his happiness. Meanwhile, my infatuation augmented, and I lived but by the looks and smiles of Donna Seraphina. A letter from Fanny, while it made me easy in respect to the health of my family, gave a sting to my heart, which, however, was soon extracted by the magic of Seraphina's eyes. Pleased to hear of all being well at Eden-bower, I locked up Fanny's letter, to avoid the pain I felt in reading her artless effusions of love. When I was diverted from confessing my marriage to my father, I fully intended to disclose it to my sister; but relinquished the design from the consciousness of the situation of my mind. I therefore continued to keep the secret in my own bosom, till succeeding events determined me to confide in Smyth."

## CHAPTER XXII.

*Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.*

“MONTH after month glided away in sweet delirium: Seraphina, her books, her music, her voice, spread enchantment around me. For some time our attachment seemed to continue pure; but at length it assumed a character that involved me in horrors. Both Don Alvarez and Donna Seraphina were extremely expensive in their manner of living, and their finances began to be unequal to their profusion. I frequently supplied her with considerable loans; for my father continued my allowance: and for these loans I received pressures of the hand, which were succeeded, on subsequent

quent loans, by pressures of the lips. Oh ! how dangerous to man is an unprincipled woman, who, with beauty, has art enough to veil her depravity ! The nature of my passion became changed ; she knew it, and was not offended ; she knew it, and seemed to pity me ; she knew it, and redoubled all the arts of intoxication ; and, though she continued to talk of virtue, scrupled not to bewail its restraints.

“ By supplying Donna Seraphina with money, I was at a loss to remit the usual allowance to Fanny. Anxious not to apply to my father, who was as uncommunicative as ever on the subject of his affairs, in my perplexity I unbosomed myself to Smyth, who lent me the sums I wanted, taking my notes as memorandums. I had still virtue enough to think periodically of supplying the means of comfort to Fanny and her children, and

to frame plausible excuses for my absence and the delay of acquainting my father with our marriage: but, as to compunction, the horror of my guilt was concealed from myself by the thought of Fanny's ignorance of it, and by the violence of my passion for Seraphina. Smyth sometimes talked of going to England; against which I laboured to dissuade him myself, and procured my sister's aid, till at length she was afraid to go to sea till Edmund was born."—"What!" cried Arthur-William, "Edmund, that we saw the other morning?"—"Yes, my dear boy," replied Mr. Cowper; "Edmund was born at Oporto, but he is not the less an Englishman: children born abroad are considered to belong to the country of their parents. About the time of his birth, I began to observe that Fanny had not written to me for a good while; but

but it did not much engage my mind, as I knew she had every comfort about her, and as I was persuaded that nothing passing at Oporto could reach her but through me. From this period, Donna Seraphina kept me suspended between the allurements of a guilty passion and the scruples of her virtue, in such a state of agitation, that I would have sacrificed my soul to her in any way.

“ One evening, when my nephew was about two months old, I was sitting with my sister, who had him on her knee, while the nurse that suckled him stood by ; she was an Englishwoman, whose husband was servant of one of the merchants of the factory. Harriet was very thoughtful, and I observed some tears drop from her eyes upon the child. Accounting for it from the natural tenderness of a mother contemplating her infant, I took no notice of it at the time ;

K. 5. and

and a note being brought to me from Donna Seraphina, desiring my company, I rose to go. Harriet then looked at me, and said, ‘ I wish you could have staid with me to-night : I have something to say to you ; but it will do to-morrow.’—‘ If so, my dear Harriet,’ said I, ‘ it *shall* be to-morrow ; for I am particularly engaged just now.’ She smiled significantly, and I left her.

“ I flew to Donna Seraphina, whom I found alone in her boudoir. She received me with a tender, but melancholy look. ‘ My dear Carlos,’ said she, ‘ I expect Don Alvarez and your friend Smyth in a few minutes ; they are only gone for my cousin Violante, and therefore I must make haste with what I have to say. I am much in your debt, my Carlos, but I am not uneasy about that ; for next month Don Alvarez receives his revenues  
“ from

‘ from his seigneurio of Pueblo, and I  
‘ shall be able to return the whole I  
‘ have borrowed from you ; besides, I  
‘ should be unworthy of our tender  
‘ friendship, could I, through pride,  
‘ regret the testimonies of it. On the  
‘ contrary, my dear Carlos, I rely upon  
‘ it once more to save me from an em-  
‘ barrassment of the most dreadful na-  
‘ ture.’—‘ Too lovely Seraphina,’ cried  
I, ‘ dispose of my purse, of my life ; but  
‘ have pity on my poor heart, and be  
‘ not for ever adverse to my happiness.’  
—‘ For shame ! Carlos,’ said she ; ‘ min-  
‘ gle not the raptures of love with the  
‘ miserable concerns of money : as these  
‘ indeed are proofs of your passion, I  
‘ often think of them, nor is such a  
‘ passion as yours always to be resisted ;  
‘ but, while the immediate object is  
‘ gold, let us talk like merchants. All  
‘ that you have advanced, or shall ad-



‘ vance for me, shall be repaid from the  
‘ Pueblo revenues ; but, in the begin-  
‘ ning of the next week, I must either  
‘ pay for my diamond necklace and  
‘ cestus or give them up, as it is not in  
‘ Don Alvarez’s power to let me have  
‘ the money. I would not part with  
‘ them for worlds !’—‘ I tremble, Se-  
‘ raphina,’ said I, ‘ lest I should not  
‘ have it immediately in my power to  
‘ gratify your wish ; but tell me the sum  
‘ wanted.’—‘ Only six hundred moi-  
‘ dores,’ said she.—I turned pale. I  
had already exhausted my allowance, and  
had borrowed some hundreds from  
Smyth. ‘ Would to Heaven ! Sera-  
‘ phina,’ cried I, ‘ that I had the com-  
‘ mand of my father’s strong chest ! not  
‘ an hour should elapse till I had brought  
‘ you the sum. Alas ! I must pain-  
‘ fully confess to you that my own re-  
‘ sources are at present very inadequate  
‘ to

‘ to such a payment.’—‘ Well, my dear  
‘ Carlos,’ said she, with a sigh, ‘ it can’t  
‘ be helped ; but it will cost me many  
‘ a pang ; for I know they will be im-  
‘ mediately bought by that envious  
‘ creature Donna Theresa de Lima ; and  
‘ you know they have been seen upon  
‘ me more than once. Can’t you bor-  
‘ row a bag or two from your father ?  
‘ Is his chest full ? Do you ever go to  
‘ it ?’—‘ My father,’ replied I, ‘ is very  
‘ reserved even to me respecting his  
‘ finances ; but, though he never sends  
‘ me to his chest, I often see him open  
‘ it, nor does he scruple going to it be-  
‘ fore his acquaintance, and it appears  
‘ well filled with bags of moidores.’—  
‘ O santa Maria !’ exclaimed she,  
laughing ; ‘ it would be delightful to  
‘ borrow a couple of his bags without  
‘ saying anything to him about it ! Now,  
‘ do, Carlos, if you love me, do. Be  
‘ assured

‘ assured you shall have them to replace  
‘ in the course of next month from the  
‘ revenues of Pueblo: he will never  
‘ miss them.’—‘ You jest, Seraphina,’  
said I, ‘ he could not but miss them  
‘ from the vacancy they must leave:  
‘ besides, I never touch his key, and  
‘ do not even know where he keeps it.’  
—‘ How unfortunate am I!’ cried she.—  
‘ Perhaps,’ said I, ‘ I may have the  
‘ good fortune to procure the sum by  
‘ other means; I will at least endeavour.  
‘ You are to be at my father’s  
‘ to-morrow, and I will let you know.’  
She smiled, and pressed the back of her  
hand to my lips. Our tête-à-tête was  
here interrupted by the entrance of  
Donna Violante, with Don Alvarez,  
Smyth, and the Italian music-master,  
whom Donna Violante had pressed into  
her service. She had herself a good  
voice, though not equal to her cousin’s;  
and

and songs, duets, and trios, speeded the flight of Time.

“ We supped, and it was late before we parted ; but I was so anxious to gratify the wishes of Donna Seraphina, that I could not go to bed till I asked Smyth to add this advance to my former debt. He answered me in the most friendly manner, that it was at present out of his power ; for, staying at Oporto longer than he intended, he had been obliged to write to his agents, to deposit three thousand pounds more in the hands of his banker, and send a new letter of credit from him, which he expected by the return of the packet ; and, if it would do then, it should be at my service. He spoke so kindly, and with such apparent candour, that it never entered my head to doubt the truth of what he said ; and, conceiving I had inspired him with a friendship for me, I opened my mind to him

him without reserve, dwelling with raptures on the charms of Seraphina, and mentioning the lively manner with which she instigated me to borrow a couple of bags from my father's strong chest. 'Admirable!' cried Smyth, laughing; 'admirable! and why not? I see no harm in it; nor shall your mind have to feel any remorse; for, should Donna Seraphina fail to reimburse the strong-box, you shall have the amount of the bags from me on the receipt of my letter.'—'Nay but, my dear friend,' said I, 'to deceive my father?'—'Why,' returned he, 'he is not very open with you in these affairs; and I declare I see no crime in overhauling the dust, if you take care to do it without being discovered.' Alas! I was now so far trained in wickedness as not to have my ear hurt by the axiom of Vice, that discovery was the essential  
part

part of a crime and the most to be guarded against. After a little reflexion, however, I told him that I did not think he was serious; and we soon after parted for the night.

“ The thoughts of Seraphina’s disappointment kept me awake all night; and I rose next morning unrefreshed and miserable. My father expected company, and with them Don Alvarez and Seraphina. She was in spirits, and playful. Among other indifferent topics, she introduced a whimsical dissertation on keys, comparing their various uses, from the little one that opened the trinket of a heart on her finger, to the substantial one that opened my father’s strong-box; and at last she persuaded him to compare hers and his together. She had communicated some degree of her spirits to him, and he went and brought the key. After a little rattle, apparently without meaning, she

she suddenly put the key in her pocket, and held it there in her hand. ‘O! signor Cowper,’ said she, ‘I am much obliged to you: I shall take care of this key, and return it to you when I have made the proper use of it.’ Having trifled a while, and raised a laugh at my father, in which he joined heartily, she took out her handkerchief and the key together, and wiping it affectedly, said, with a smile, ‘Come, come, signor, don’t be alarmed; there it is, even brighter than when I pocketed it.’ She then returned it with infinite grace, singing a verse of a song about a lock and key, as my father went out of the room to put it up. While he was out, she called Smyth to her, and gave him a flat round box, which she took out of her pocket, saying: ‘I found your box this morning, and there it is.’ He thanked her, put it up, and shortly

shortly after left the room. The day passed with our wonted gaiety; except that I observed a slight gloom on the countenance of my sister, with whom I had not found an opportunity of explanation, which indeed she now seemed to avoid. When I handed Donna Seraphina to her sedan, she said to me in a whisper: ‘ Let me see you to-morrow evening about nine: I am engaged the whole day, but, at that hour I will return home alone.’ She then pressed my hand, and accompanied the pressure with one of those seductive looks which had already ruined the candour of my mind, and prepared it for the easy admission of every vice. My dear children,” continued Mr. Cowper, addressing his young friends, “ be assured that candour is one of the best sentinels of rectitude and peace of mind: the moment we begin to conceal our actions



actions from those who have a right to know them, we have removed our principal guard, and left the avenues open to the enemy.

“ I was too much the slave of Seraphina to neglect the appointment; and, such was my punctuality, that I rang at the bell as she returned. She received me with increased tenderness; and I followed her to her boudoir, where I saw a sealed packet on her table. ‘ Carlos,’ said she, ‘ I am going to put your love to the test; and, if it prove as great as I think it is, there is no test to which you may not put mine.’ ‘ Name it,’ ‘ Seraphina,’ cried I; ‘ for such a reward what would I not do! Find me some instrument that will demolish the sides of my father’s chest; or teach me some chemical process that will dissolve the iron case; I’ll do it, and brave the consequences!’ — ‘ Silly Carlos,’

‘ Carlos,’ said she, smiling, ‘ to think  
‘ of force : I should not deserve your  
‘ love could I expose you to such cer-  
‘ tainty of a breach with your father :  
‘ No, no, there is no need of hammers  
‘ or chemistry ; wit is the best instru-  
‘ ment, and money the best chemistry ;  
‘ a small mixture of them has rendered a  
‘ visit to your father’s chest very easy  
‘ and safe.’ As she spoke she opened  
the packet, from which she took the box  
I had seen her the evening before give  
to Smyth, and laid it down. There re-  
mained something folded up, which she  
held still covered, saying, ‘ This is the  
‘ talisman, which will suffice, by the  
‘ gentlest application, to make the lid  
‘ of the box fly open. By means of my  
‘ chemical art, I procured it from a Cy-  
‘ clops : take it ; it possesses the quality  
‘ of trying love.’ I took this talisman,  
which, on unfolding the paper, I found  
to

to be a key, the wards of which were exactly the same as those of my father's. I started: imaginary flights of passion gave way before the reality of a deed at which I could not but shudder. Compunction, however, was but momentary; a look from Seraphina effaced it from my heart. 'But, dear Seraphina,' cried I, 'though this enables me to remove a bag, it does not secure me from a discovery; my father will certainly miss the number I take out.'—'What a novice,' said she, 'is this Carlos of mine! it will be your fault if he does. Here are a bag of counters; you have only to exchange them for the coin: the same bags being filled and placed lowest, will remove every chance of their being missed for many months; and the coin will be replaced in less than two, from the revenues of Pueblo.' I was bewildered, and gave up my reason

reason to this enchantress. I even wondered at my fears, when there was so little hazard of discovery, and when I was so certain of returning the money soon, either through the means of Donna Seraphina, or of my friend Smyth. I could not help expressing my surprise at her having a false key; at which she laughed, and said, it was odd I should be surprised, when she had procured it before my own eyes; and she unravelled the whole mystery, by opening the box that accompanied the key, where I saw the wards of my father's key impressed on wax. She had obtained the key by her humour, had made the impression in her pocket on wax she had prepared for the purpose, and had given it immediately to Smyth, whom, she confessed to me, she had forced into a league with her, on his lamenting his inability to let me have the money soon enough. Smyth lost

no

no time in carrying it to a locksmith, who, supposing himself only the instrument of an intrigue, to which he was not unaccustomed, received his Johannes, and produced the key, without a grain of pity for the husband who had not the art of securing a wife against all keys, by placing the lock on her heart.

“ While I remained with Donna Seraphina, my resolution to perpetrate the deed never wavered, and I thought only of the reward of my crime. I urged her with the utmost ardour to put a period to suspense; to which she replied, with one of those irresistible looks of which she was perfectly mistress, that Don Alvarez was going the next day to spend a week at his *Quinta* \*, and that she was not to accompany him. The images that attended this declaration completed the intoxication of my senses, and I was

\* A country-house.

wound

wound up to a pitch of frenzy which might have impelled me to more horrid crimes than robbery in the pursuit of my recompence. Donna Seraphina saw the intemperate effects of my inebriation, and, fearing the return of Don Alvarez before I could master my emotions, she urged me to be gone, and at length forced me away. I reached my father's door without once abstracting my thoughts from the charms of Donna Seraphina. I rung, and the information of my father being at home awakened a new train of ideas. I could not bear to see him ; and, telling the servant that I was going to Mr. Smyth's, I turned from the house without going in.

“ As I walked, a conflict arose in my mind between duty and passion, in which the latter had the better throughout, and was ultimately victorious ; soothing my conscience by determining first to be re-

assured by Smyth that he would enable me to replace the two bags of moidores. For some days he had been in treaty for a new carriage, to make excursions in the country, and he had been trying one that very day. We happened to stop at his door precisely at the same moment; and, instead of ringing, I got into the carriage and sat by him. He laughed at my scruples, and again assured me of the money. I think I see the villain now, squeezing my hand, talking of his connexion, expressing his friendship. After some farther talk, in which he strove to remove my scruples, he invited me to dine with him next day, and we parted.

“ I returned home, encouraging myself with the certainty of replacing the money; and I had so far argued myself into a contempt of what Smyth termed my weakness, that I could bear to see  
my

my father. I thought he received me with unusual kindness. He was writing when I entered the room; but, on seeing me, he put his paper into his portfolio. After some common chat, he said: 'I think, Charles, that you have been long enough in Portugal. I am not sorry that the climate and the society of Oporto have had charms enough to make a year of your life pass so agreeably; but, my son, it is all pleasure and no progress. Here it is impossible you can connect yourself: I wish you had brought a wife with you.' He looked mildly, yet fixedly at me, as he said this: but, though my conscience inclined me to detect in his look an allusion to Fanny, I could not. 'But, as you did not,' continued he, 'don't you think it is time to go back for one? You know that I have always placed great hope on your marrying properly.'



‘perly.’—‘My dear fir,’ said I, ‘it is  
‘a circumstance that must be left to  
‘time and fate: I have no thoughts of  
‘a wife at present.’—‘I believe you,  
‘Charles,’ replied he, with a look that  
now to my mind became equivocal;  
‘but I am sorry while I believe it, for  
‘you *should* think of one.’—‘*Should!*  
‘fir,’ said I, in great agitation, ‘why  
‘*should?*’—‘My dear boy,’ replied he,  
calmly, ‘wherefore this emotion? per-  
‘haps, on reflexion, you may think it  
‘your *duty*—when I have so repeatedly  
‘expressed my wishes to you on the  
‘subject.’ He paused at the word *duty*,  
and I should certainly have betrayed my-  
self, had he not added his conclusion.  
‘I will not distress you on this point,’  
continued he; ‘take your own time.  
‘I feel, Charles, that I have used you  
‘ill, in not being more open to you on  
‘the subject of my fortune. It is, per-  
3 ‘haps,

‘ haps, too late to repair my error ; but  
‘ it is my intention to converse with you  
‘ soon fully on the situation of my af-  
‘ fairs : in the mean time, forgive me,  
‘ I beseech you, for my former reserve,  
‘ and for the erroneous system I have  
‘ pursued.’ As he spoke this he put out  
his hand, which I pressed with warmth to  
my lips, entreating him not to torture  
me by reproaching himself ; for I was  
sensible he had been all goodness to me.  
He pressed my hand, and withdrew his.  
‘ Tell me, Charles,’ said he, ‘ have  
‘ you never thought it extraordinary  
‘ that I should keep so many bags of  
‘ money locked up at home in my chest,  
‘ when it might be otherwise disposed  
‘ of to great advantage ?’ That my  
father should take this night of all others  
to ask me such a question, confounded  
me. I believe I stared at him wildly,  
as if I was sure he had penetrated my  
L 3 design.

design. 'I own,' continued he, taking no notice either of my looks or silence, 'that  
' it is mysterious; but, when I tell you  
' that the chest contains a secret, the revealing of which may be fatal to me, I  
' am sure you will not think me cruel in  
' persevering in the mystery till I have  
' fully matured the secret for your knowledge; and, therefore, I shall only say  
' at present, that all the contents of the  
' chest are for your wife, let her be  
' whom she may!' What a juncture for such a conversation! The ambiguity of the language kept my mind upon the rack; and, while it lasted, I was either dumb or incoherent. My father perceived the state I was in, but pretended to pass it unobserved; and, changing the conversation, managed to put me more at my ease before we retired.

"In bidding me good-night, I thought he did it with a peculiar emphasis; but  
I again

I again ascribed my perceptions to the suspicions of conscience. I shall never forget the war of emotions that raged in my mind when I was alone. The doubt of my father's knowledge of my marriage, his kindness, his dejection, his mystery, his secret, all raised a host of feelings to form ramparts of virtue around the chest; and, at first, I believed them impregnable. I resolved to relinquish the design. I locked up the false key and counters in my desk, I undressed, lighted my lamp, put out my taper, went into bed, and shut my eyes. I soon, however, found that sleep was out of the question: the remembrance of my father's conversation by degrees faded away, and gave place to that of Donna Seraphina. The latter part of it revived in my imagination with double force, and brought with it an irresistible assemblage of charms: the ramparts fell

before them one after another. I argued that my marriage must be unknown to my father, as he would not have continued to hoard his treasure had he been apprized of it; his kindness was a pledge of his forgiveness if he discovered me; his dejection I had observed upon my arrival: whatever his mystery consisted in should remain unexplored, and his secret should be respected; for I would do nothing more than change the moulds of two bags for counters, and that with an expedition that should not give me time to observe any thing besides in the chest. Thus were the fortifications destroyed; but not without a struggle, nor till Donna Seraphina's image had so renewed my intoxication that I would have sacrificed my life for her.

“ The chest stood in a large light closet, situated between my father's room and that which I occupied, having a  
door

door into each : in this closet he wrote and kept his papers. A common brown wainscot separated it from either room. I rose gently and threw my wrapping gown about me. As I lighted my taper, the clock of the neighbouring convent struck three : the sound of the first stroke so startled me that I had nearly put out both the taper and lamp. The tremor it produced continued upon me ; I shook every limb. On opening the door of my chamber which communicated with the closet, I perceived that my father's door stood ajar : I listened, and heard him distinctly breathe, as if he were in a sound sleep. Having taken the key and the counters from my desk, I tottered slowly and barefoot into the closet. I advanced to the chest, and, setting my taper down on a chair that stood by it, I attempted to apply the key, but was some moments before I could collect

a sufficient degree of steadiness in my hand to succeed. At length I fixed it, and, turning it as softly as I could, raised the ponderous lid. Guess my surprise when I found that the treasure I wanted was secured by a second massy door. My surprise was momentary; it yielded to a guilty joy, on seeing the key lying on it. To the key was tied a broad label, which I no sooner took up than these words struck my eyes: *Charles, I pity you! The contents of this chest are now all your own! the robbery you intended is converted into legal possession by my death! Look round!* I stood bent and aghast; Seraphina and all her charms vanished; horror took possession of my soul. "Look round!" thundered through my ear, in my father's voice, from a corner of the room. I involuntarily obeyed, and, as my eye caught his figure at his chamber-door, he raised a vial to his mouth. Wild as  
I was,

I was, his purpose flashed upon my thought, and I made a spring to dash the poison from his lips; but, instead of effecting my design, I fell senseless at his feet.

“ When I recovered my recollection, I found that my father had locked the chest, and was sitting near me with the two keys in his hand. ‘ Rise, Charles,’ said he; ‘ I have no time to lose.’ I rose as quickly as I could, and staggered to my own door. ‘ Where are you going?’ cried he.—‘ For medical assistance,’ I replied as distinctly as I could.—‘ Come back,’ said he; ‘ do not force me to anticipate the effects of the draught by speedier means.’—‘ To curse me thus! Sir,’ cried I.—‘ It is to prevent your thinking so,’ Charles, that I detain you,’ said he, mildly. ‘ No; my son, you are not to blame; you are not the cause of my  
L 6                      ‘ death.



‘ death. I meant that the mode of it  
‘ should alarm you; for I found you plung-  
‘ ing into guilt: consider it, therefore, as  
‘ a blessing; let it impress on your soul  
‘ indelible resolutions never to be in-  
‘ duced by any temptation to deviate  
‘ a hair’s breadth from the line of recti-  
‘ tude. I have long resolved on this  
‘ action, for reasons of which I have  
‘ left an account in my desk: this is the  
‘ key; you will find it in a cover,  
‘ directed to yourself. Meanwhile take  
‘ my blessing, and give me your forgive-  
‘ ness before-hand, for the confession you  
‘ will find there; as I forgive you for  
‘ your clandestine marriage, and for the  
‘ weakness that yielded to the allurements  
‘ of artful beauty.’—‘ Oh, my father!’  
cried I, distractedly, ‘ live, I beseech  
‘ you, if possible: suffer me, oh suffer  
‘ me to call in assistance, and to bring  
‘ my sister and Smyth; there is yet  
‘ time.’

‘ time.’—‘ Charles,’ said my father, relenting, ‘ I almost wish there were; for, as  
‘ I begin to feel the power of the potion  
‘ —its operation will be speedy—something here,’ said he, striking his breast,  
‘ tells me I have committed a dreadful  
‘ crime. I took much pains to satisfy  
‘ my reason; but a more powerful faculty now applies to be satisfied: your  
‘ distress agitates me, and has awakened  
‘ conscience. Oh! that I had continued to suffer the pangs of remorse,  
‘ and left my fate with Him whose will  
‘ it was that I should act my part on this  
‘ stage of existence! Let me, Charles,  
‘ have the satisfaction to believe that  
‘ the horror I confess has seized me for  
‘ this crime, may have the effect of curing you from it: swear to me, that  
‘ nothing on earth, no passion, no mental torture, shall have power to instigate you to such a deed: this use of  
‘ my

‘ my crime may, perhaps, assist in its  
‘ atonement. Swear!’ — ‘ I do, my  
‘ father—but is it indeed too late?’—  
‘ Be assured it is; let us endeavour  
‘ to be composed: come with me into  
‘ my chamber.’ — ‘ Will you not see  
‘ my sister?’ — ‘ No; I must spare her.’  
‘ Nor Smyth?’ — ‘ Smyth!’ cried he,  
with a look of indignation; ‘ Smyth is  
‘ a consummate villain. Unhappily he  
‘ is married to your sister, whom you  
‘ cannot forsake; but guard yourself  
‘ against him, as you would against the  
‘ Devil. Foul falsehood, hypocrisy,  
‘ treachery, have the united dominion  
‘ of his black heart. It was he betrayed  
‘ you to me: you will find his scrawl in  
‘ my desk. He has disguised his hand;  
‘ but, unperceived, I myself saw him  
‘ yesterday deposit the letter on my  
‘ table. It communicates your mar-  
‘ riage, and the design to which you  
‘ were

‘ were urged by Donna Seraphina.’—I was too much confounded to speak.—  
‘ But come, my son, be firm, and attend like a man to the office that now remains to be performed. I have, perhaps, an hour or more to live: listen to my last request. The venom that is now beginning to circulate in my veins, I know, from seeing it tried by the vender, a Neopolitan doctor, on a spaniel, will terminate life with little pain, and no appearance of violence. As you regard my blessing, as you regard your own peace and that of your sister, take advantage of this circumstance to let the effect appear accidental.’

“ The amazement which had bewildered my senses having subsided a little, my sensibility increased; I kissed my father’s hand, and shed a shower of tears upon it. ‘ Now,’ continued he, ‘ I think

‘ think the horror of my mind would be  
‘ relieved, if I could receive the blessed  
‘ communion ; and He, who knows the  
‘ sincerity of my repentance, may look  
‘ down with compassion on the last act of  
‘ my life, and suffer it to be weighed  
‘ against the guilt of suicide. Call up the  
‘ servants ; let them believe me suddenly  
‘ taken ill ; and dispatch one of them for  
‘ the chaplain of the factory.’ I hurried  
on my clothes and obeyed ; and, in the  
mean time, my father went into bed.  
You will better conceive than I should  
paint the remainder of this scene ; nor  
will I lengthen the account of it. Not  
only the chaplain, but the doctor came.  
The latter felt his pulse, put his ques-  
tions, and knew not what to make of the  
case ; but, at all events, prescribed an  
emetic. At the word emetic, I felt a  
hope revive ; I thought it an interposi-  
tion of Providence, and I hastened the  
doctor

doctor away to send the medicine. The chaplain now administered the sacrament: I knelt by the bed-side, repenting my folly, forming resolutions, and consecrating my future life to virtue and religion; yet while, at my father's desire, I participated the communion with him, one of the most unchristian passions, REVENGE, lurked at my heart. All my better resolutions were still accompanied with the thoughts of wreaking my vengeance upon Smyth; and I believe that the contemplation of it mixing with my distress, enabled me to support myself through it. The crime of harbouring such a passion, at the moment I was uniting in the most solemn act, in remembrance of Him whose life and precepts so fully inculcated its diabolical nature, never occurred to me. At the conclusion of the service, my father pressed my hand faintly, and saying in a feeble

feeble tone, 'I am happier than I was,' expired."

Mr. Cowper being here very much affected, ceased speaking, and Arthur brought him a glass of water; but not a word was said by any of the party; even Arthur-William was too much awed to break the silence of Mr. Cowper's pause.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

*Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.*

THE sympathy of the party relieved the mind of Mr. Cowper, who, pleased with the feelings he had excited, resumed his narrative with confidence. "Conceive," said he, "the state of my mind during the remaining hours of the night, or rather of the morning, afflicted as I was by the loss of my father, and oppressed by the horrible secret which he had charged me to keep, and which my reason told me it would be wickedness and madness to reveal. The horror I felt was considerably suspended by my meditating on the signal vengeance I meant to take on Smyth, and by considering the  
imbe-



imbecility as well as villainy of his conduct; for I knew not how the wretch could for a moment imagine that it was possible for him to remain undetected, or escape my resentment. Alas! the sequel has proved how little I conceived the depth of his arts.

“ Distracted by the events of the night, and agitated by a violent desire of revenge, I resolved not to delay it: I had no compunction on the score of his being my sister’s husband; for, in the excess of my rage, I thought to rid her of such a serpent was to serve her, and, before it was light, I wrote a note to him, in which I said nothing more than that he was a villain, and that I should expect to meet him in an hour at the Torro de Marca. I dispatched it as soon as it was day by a servant, whom I charged to call up Mr. Smyth, and to deliver it into his own hands. While  
the

the servant was gone, I finished a letter to my sister, to be given to her in the course of the morning, in which I begged her to be resigned, to perform the last offices to my father, to make use of the contents of his chest, to settle his affairs, and to act with respect to herself with prudence, and according to the event of my meeting with Smyth. I was closing it when the servant returned with my challenge, and a message that Mr. Smyth had not been at home all night, but was expected back to dinner that day.

“ As my passion was not abated, I felt exceedingly chagrined and irritated ; but, throwing the note into my father’s desk, I took up the paper directed to me, and examined its contents. I will not lose time in repeating them at large to you : they were the principal events of his life, with the motives of his conduct,

duſt, and apologies to me and my ſiſter for the error he had fallen into in his mode of treating us. His expences had always far exceeded his income, and, for ſome years paſt, he had been abſolutely living on his principal, which was nearly at an end. His grand object was, that my ſiſter and I ſhould marry well; and he believed, for the paper was written previous to his knowledge of Smyth's villainy, that he had obtained his deſire ſo far as it reſpected her. As he found his money ſinking, he reſolved to leave England, and to endeavour to make amends for his former imprudence, by throwing part of what remained into trade; and, being in great friendſhip with a gentleman of the name of Horton, ſettled at Oporto, had gone thither on purpoſe for his advice and aſſiſtance. He had, however, formed no connexion before my arrival, nor did he  
after-

afterwards : at the time of his death, his whole fortune was in his chest ; nor would it have been inconsiderable to have judged by the appearance of the bags, large and small, heaped end-ways one upon another ; and it was for the sake of this appearance that he used occasionally to go to the chest before his friends ; but very few of the bags contained money. Thus, in addition to the discovery of the treachery of a pretended friend, and the arts of a mercenary mistress, the loss of my father disclosed to me the ruin of his fortune, and my reduction to poverty.

“ The state of my mind was dreadful, and I in vain endeavoured to compose my spirits. As the morning advanced, I considered it as now useless, and indeed impossible, to conceal my father’s death from my sister till my meeting with Smyth ; and hoping for myself  
some

some ease from her sympathy, I sent for her. She was both surprised and affected at the event; but I left her ignorant of the truth for some time, as I had scarcely courage myself to reflect upon it. I made no scruple, however, of revealing to her the insolvent state of my father's affairs, the manner in which Donna Seraphina had practised on my heart, and the intention I had had of supplying her from my father's chest; but, not to wound her abruptly, I avoided at first speaking of Smyth.

“ Having listened to me with great attention, she cast up her eyes and hands to Heaven, burst into a fresh flood of tears, and fell upon my neck. When her emotion suffered her to speak, she said: ‘ Oh, Charles! I feel for your situation, and for the state in which your mind must be: Would to Heaven! I could console you; but, alas! my

---

‘ my brother, it is my fate to increase  
‘ your misery.’—‘ I fear, Harriet,’ said  
I, ‘ that your marriage has not borne the  
‘ test of time ; that all its promised hap-  
‘ piness has been consumed in a honey-  
‘ moon.’—‘ Your fears,’ replied she,  
‘ are but too just. I have more than  
‘ once had thoughts of throwing my-  
‘ self on my father’s protection, and  
‘ requesting him to effect a separation  
‘ from the brute to whom I am unfor-  
‘ tunately bound. The occurrences of  
‘ yesterday evening had fully determined  
‘ me to delay it no longer; but what will  
‘ become of me now, Heaven only  
‘ knows! Now that you are destitute,  
‘ what hope can there be for me!  
‘ Smyth’s brutality will be increased too  
‘ by finding that I have no fortune; for  
‘ he has more than once made it the  
‘ subject of sarcasm and abusive lan-  
‘ guage. You, my dear brother, igno-  
VOL. II. M rantly,

‘rantly, have been more than once the  
‘cause of his treating me ill. When  
‘to you the hypocrite smiled and lent  
‘the sums you borrowed, to me he  
‘preserved not the mask; he dared to  
‘abuse both you and my father, pre-  
‘judged our ruinous state, and lavished  
‘on me all the rancour an inveterate,  
‘malignant heart could suggest. I  
‘wished to have spoken to you before  
‘your last application to him; but your  
‘engagement with Donna Seraphina pre-  
‘vented me, and it was made before I  
‘saw you again. On hearing, which I  
‘immediately did, of its being unsuc-  
‘cessful, I thought it needless to make  
‘you uneasy.’—‘But, Harriet,’ said I,  
‘was this friendly? was this like a sis-  
‘ter? to leave me in the dark, the fool  
‘of such a villain?’—‘My dear brother,’  
replied she, ‘you know him not; he is  
‘the Devil himself in the shape of man.  
‘I obeyed

‘ I obeyed him through dread : I firmly  
‘ believe that neither your life nor mine  
‘ would be safe, were he to imagine that  
‘ I have exposed his character to you.  
‘ Last night, after your conversation with  
‘ him in the carriage at our door, a  
‘ dreadful scene took place between us.  
‘ Oh, such expressions ! Where could a  
‘ man find such language ! But the bit-  
‘ terness of words were not all ; he  
‘ struck me violently !”

Mr. Cowper’s emotions at the time his sister spoke, could hardly have been more violent than were those of Arthur, at his recital of the fact. “ Struck her !” cried he, starting up : “ strike a woman ! “ what a scoundrel !”—“ Be moderate, “ my dear Arthur,” said Aubrey, “ there “ are many brutes in the human form “ treading the surface of the globe.”— “ Brutes ! sir,” replied Arthur ; “ say “ devils.”—“ Smyth, as my sister ob-  
M 2 served,



served, was certainly one," said Cowper. "To Arthur's indignation add the horror of my mind, and the rage excited by the recency of the fact related by a sister in tears, and guess the storm that agitated my soul. At one moment, I gave vent to it in bitter epithets; at another, I restrained myself, by reflecting how near vengeance was at hand; and to soothe my sister, who was extremely alarmed at the passion to which I had given way, I appeared to yield to her persuasions and arguments. I will not here dwell minutely on the circumstances my sister communicated to me; suffice it to say, that Smyth's passion for her abated by degrees, and that at last he discovered himself to be the worst of barbarians; the rancour of his spirit extended even to his child, whom, to increase her torments, he dashed from her arms with violence, and loaded with curses.

curfes. You wonder that ſhe concealed his treatment of her: Harriet was timid, and the wretch threatened her with the moſt horrid conſequences if ever the real ſtate of the life they led were known. Her knowledge of his hypocrify, while it ſurprized and diſgusted her, galled him to the ſoul; for he could not bear the conſciouſneſs of there being an eye that obſerved the double part he played.”—“ I ſuppoſe,” cried Arthur-William, “ that he did not think that “ God ſaw it too.”—“ Indeed, my dear “ boy,” ſaid Mr. Cowper, “ he did not.” The wicked mind only the eyes of men: as God is inviſible, they forget that he is preſent.

“ After parting with me in the carriage at his own door, Smyth went into his houſe, abuſed, and beat his wife; firſt reviled me, then ſaid I was to dine with him next day, and ordered her to

prepare a dinner. He told her that he should go and pass the night at the *quinta* of one of his Portuguese acquaintance, but should return to keep his appointment next day; and commanded her, as she valued her life and mine, to support the mask he chose she should wear. It was, however, no longer supportable, and she had determined to throw it off that very day. Harriet, aware of the consequences, urged me with prayers, arguments, and tears, not to act rashly, but to take time to consider what was to be done both for her and myself: and, to relieve her distraction, I seemed to agree that it would be better to postpone an explanation with her husband. She staid with me all the morning, but went home a little before the hour she expected him back, in order to inform him of my father's death, and of my inability to leave the house.

“ She

“ She was no sooner gone, than I again gave my challenge to the man who had carried it before, enjoining him to watch Smyth’s return, and to put it into his hands, if possible, before he entered his house. I had no time to examine the money-chest; and was too agitated to give directions about my father’s funeral, which I entirely trusted to my sister; and which, as he was not a catholic, it was necessary to conduct as privately as possible. I continued an hour pacing my chamber, in expectation of an answer from Smyth. Though my revenge on him chiefly occupied my mind, thoughts of Donna Seraphina combined to feed the fire that raged within me. I no longer beheld in her the angel that had charmed me, but the mercenary tool and accomplice of the villain who had detained me from my Fanny, abused my inexperienced heart, and

blasted my virtue. Another hour passed without tidings of my messenger, for whose return I became more and more impatient. Hour after hour elapsed, and the day began to close, when I saw him cross the court-yard with a letter in his hand, which I doubted not was the reply I wanted; but, soon entering my chamber, he delivered back the one he had received from me, informing me at the same time, that my sister was very uneasy at Mr. Smyth's delay. Unable to account for it myself, and not conceiving him so low-minded as to descend to the petty insolence of leaving me to wait his appointment at dinner, which he never meant to keep, I muffled myself up in a cloke, under which I concealed my sword and pistols, and, taking advantage of the dusk, hurried to his house. Depositing my arms and cloke in an outer room, I went to my sister, whom

whom I found in tears over Edmund. I endeavoured awkwardly to console her, while the advance of night increased her alarm. Finding, on inquiry, that both his French servants had attended him, I began to suspect that he meant to complete his villainy by deserting his wife and child. This apprehension abating the fury of revenge, by which for many hours I had been blinded, the folly of my putting him to death rushed upon my mind, and I saw at once the calamities to which I should have exposed my sister, totally unacquainted as we were with Smyth's affairs, which I did not doubt were so arranged as to deprive her of all hope of a resource from them. So inconsistent are the passions, that the meeting I ardently desired but a few minutes before for an opportunity to cut his throat, I now as anxiously wished, for the purpose of assuring myself that my

sister would not lose the advantage of his life, as he might be compelled in England to support her in a state of separation.

“ We continued in this painful state of suspense till between nine and ten o’clock at night, when I determined to go and make an inquiry at the inn where he generally hired horses. There every doubt was soon removed : I saw the man who had driven his carriage to the first stage on the north road, where he had immediately taken fresh horses for Braga ; and, making both the Frenchmen get into the carriage with him, determined to travel all night.” — “ Good Heaven ! ” exclaimed Mrs. Aubrey, “ what a thorough villain ! ” — “ This confirmation of my suspicion,” proceeded Mr. Cowper, “ came like a thunderbolt upon me, and almost deprived me of my senses. My poor sister bore

Bore it with more resignation than I expected, and indeed better than I did. We searched every place in the house, in hopes of finding a letter from him: not a word did he leave either in writing or by message. The servants were as much surprised at the event as their mistress. He had not only carried off his clothes, but every thing of value belonging to him, leaving only what was hired. After sitting some time longer with my sister, I advised her to remain in the house till I had considered what was to be done; and, obtaining her promise to endeavour to compose herself and be resigned, I again wrapped myself up as before in my cloke, and returned home, where I wrote a few lines to Mr. Horton, the friend I mentioned, urging him to come to me early next morning, as it was my intention to consult him in the



dilemma in which both my sister and I so unexpectedly found ourselves.

“ Exhausted by the agitation I had suffered without remission for so many hours, together with the want of sleep, I was unable to sit up any longer, and, throwing off my clothes, I went to bed. I slept, but it was in a very disturbed manner; my agitation was continued in dreams, and I awoke next morning in a fever. Mr. Horton was in the house, and came to my bedside; but, finding that I spoke incoherently, he advised me to keep myself quiet, and to see a physician. From this time I recollect nothing that happened for ten days, when the crisis of the fever terminating in my favour, my delirium abated, and I found my sister performing the part of a nurse to me. When I was sufficiently recovered to converse without danger, she informed me that my father was buried

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on the second day after I was taken ill, and that his funeral was attended by Mr. Horton and most of the gentlemen of the factory; that Smyth had drawn every shilling out of the hands of his merchant, and had been heard of at Corunna, where he had embarked in a vessel for Bordeaux; that he had, however, paid all his debts at Oporto, with the rent of the house he occupied for the month entered upon; that she had given it up to the landlord, and had come immediately to me. She told me likewise that Donna Seraphina had set out with Don Alvarez de Monocella the day after my father's death for Del Pueblo, without fixing any time for their return to Oporto.

“ My recovery was considerably retarded by the pangs I felt on account of my conduct to Fanny: I confessed my folly and wickedness to Harriet, and  
formed

formed a thousand resolutions of atonement. The bitterness of self-reproach was softened by the friendly, affectionate arguments of my sister ; and I began to flatter myself that my lovely, innocent Fanny would think and speak in the same manner. My pure passion for her again took possession of my heart with redoubled force ; I longed to be once more at Eden-bower, to obtain her pardon on my knees, and to embrace the little pledges of our love, one of whom only I had seen. These happy anticipations were interrupted by reflexions on the silence of my wife, whose correspondence had ceased for a long time ; nor were the fears it created, now to be removed or lessened by the blind devotion of my heart to an unworthy object. Sometimes a dread of the worst would seize my soul, and I became frantic at the thought. Neither Harriet nor I had.

had any further ties to bind us to Oporto; and, being resolved to quit it as soon as possible, every day appeared an age that deferred the bliss I by turns painted to my fancy as reserved for me at Eden-bower. As soon, therefore, as I was able to undertake business, I entered into a thorough examination of my affairs, which I found to be in a very deplorable state. All the money left by my father was not enough to discharge the remaining debts; and I should not have been able to leave Oporto but for the generosity of his friend, Mr. Horton, to whom I fully communicated my situation, not omitting my marriage, and the little settlement I had made on Fanny and her children. The worthy man proposed to arrange and settle every thing for me at Oporto, to advance me a sum of money sufficient to carry my sister and myself

to

to England, and to take my bond for the amount, which he kindly said he had not a doubt I should in a little time be able to pay. He was scandalized at the conduct of Smyth, but imagined, as he was a man of such fortune, that, by a mere application to his banker, I should find him when he returned to England, and be able to obtain a provision for his wife and child; for which purpose he advised that my sister should carry home the certificate of her marriage, with additional attestations. This advice of course she followed. I executed a bond for five hundred pounds sterling to the generous Horton, of whom we took an affectionate leave; and, having engaged a passage in a ship bound to Bristol, having obtained a memorandum from Smyth's merchant of the names of the bankers in London who had given his credit, names of the first re-

spectability, and having taken leave of all from whom I had received civilities, I embarked with my sister and Edmund; my heart divided between regrets for the shameful life I had spent at Oporto, and hopes of a virtuous and happy one at Melford.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

*Continuation of Mr. Cowper's History.*

MR. Cowper's story proving longer than he suspected it would, he again apologized for the circumstantial manner into which he was led by his feelings, and proposed to defer the rest of it; but against this the party unanimously declared, and he proceeded thus:

“ During the passage my sister and I mutually consoled each other, and laid plans for the future. To me the most pleasing of our conversations were those of which Fanny was the subject: my passion seemed to increase as I approached nearer to its object; and, suffering my ear to be beguiled by the friendly

friendly effusions of my sister's affection, I lost sight of my crimes, and yielded my soul entirely to the delightful hope of being happy with my Fanny. For many days before we landed I thought of nothing but her; I continually painted her to my imagination in all her charms of mind and person, and I defied the malice of fortune. With what pleasure did I again behold the shores of Old England; and how did it increase as the rich fields of Devon and Somersetshire seemed to dart past the ship as she steered with a fair wind for the mouth of the Avon, into which we found the tide pouring rapidly! Without delay we entered the river. How sweetly did I recognize the well known objects of its romantic banks, where I had spent many a happy hour with my Fanny! As we passed the Hot-wells, my eyes eagerly examined every face upon the walk,



walk, as if they expected to meet hers ; and, when I reflected that she might have been there, had I given her notice of my sailing, I reproached myself for the loss of the hours that were to intervene between that moment and my arrival at Eden-bower. While at a distance, I had been too busy in painting the happiness of home, to think of bringing her from it ; but I repented the blindness of my avarice of joy, when my senses convinced me that we might have met sooner. I consoled myself, however, with the thought of having her in my arms, and pressing her to my bosom, before the day was over ; and I determined now to enjoy the concealment of my return from every creature, till I knocked at my cottage and imparted it to Fanny herself.

“ At Bristol I carried my sister to an inn, where, seeing her and Edmund well  
accom-

accommodated, I left her to take charge of our baggage ; and, promising to return to her next day with Fanny, set out at two o'clock in a post-chaise for Thornbury. I had now been absent more than a year ; but every hedge, every tree, every house, recalled the past events of my life, and blended them with the present hour : I felt as if I had seen all the objects that presented themselves only the day before ; but my impatience to behold my Fanny seemed to increase the distance from one milestone to another, and, though the post-boy drove rapidly, I thought him long upon the road. I met many persons whose faces were familiar to me ; and, notwithstanding my resolution to conceal myself, I could not help giving them a cordial nod as I passed ; for they were the animated memorials of happy days. Sometimes I continued for many minutes

minutes absorbed in contrasting the delight of an innocent passion with the horror of a guilty one; at others, in figuring my reception at Eden-bower: now I made speeches for Fanny, and now I protested my love with all the original ardour of my heart.

“ These reveries lasted till the chaise was near Thornbury, when I stopped the post-boy to desire him to drive through a lane, by which he might avoid the town, and to put me down at the stile which led over the fields to Mel-ford. When he stopped opposite to it, and opened the chaise-door, my mind and feelings were so occupied by the recollections it awakened, that I could hardly give the little attention that was necessary to settle with him. By the warmth of the post-boy’s thanks, I imagine I greatly overpaid him: but I was sitting on the stile where I saw Fanny  
come

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come from the opposite one with her wooden bowl and bottle of water, her white towel and piece of soap: where she first perceived that my arm was broke, shed tears, and blessed me. I sat no longer, however, than while I took out my purse and discharged the chaise. I now trod the foot-path where I saw her insulted, where she caught me by the arm, and besought my protection; where I fought her battle, and lost my Virgil; where I first admired her beauty and the native grace of her virtuous emotions, while the features of her face and the posture of her person were governed by gratitude mingling with self-reproach. With the loss of my Virgil I associated the finding of it, the artless confession of my Fanny's love, her exclamation of 'What! your virtuous wife!' the first kiss I stole; and one happy idea ushering in another, my imagination had proceeded

ceeded to the wedding-day, the whole village decked in white and gay clothes, following us to the altar, when I was suddenly roused from my rapturous trance by the sound of the village church-bell.

“ The air was still, the sky serene ; it was a Sabbath evening in the middle of June : I was rising the slope, at the top of which the view of the village opens on the sight. I now wondered that I had met none of the villagers strolling : the thought oppressed my mind ; and the melancholy, solemn sound of the bell, which I soon perceived was tolling the forsaken frame of some departed spirit to its grave, inspired a gloom, which I endeavoured in vain to disperse by thinking of joy and Fanny. Reaching the summit of the ascent, I saw the vivid images of my wedding scenes, which I had been so rapturously contemplating,

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completely contrasted by a long procession of mourners, blockading the avenue to the church. All the inhabitants seemed to be gathered together: except in the line of this gloomy train, not a human creature was to be seen; and, though the trees and fields wore their finest verdure, a universal dulness pervaded the country; a general silence, like that of night, prevailed, rendered more awful by the solemn interruption of the loud, single sound of the funeral bell, returning on the ear after long and equal pauses. It was a scene to damp the most ardent joy. The contagion of sorrow seized my heart: the general affection, evidenced by the general attendance, showed the loss to be no common one; it might be the venerated Grey himself, whose soul had flown to Heaven. I was confirmed in this opinion by the full concourse of his parishioners. Sure of finding my Fanny

among them, I resolved to join them. My clothes were indeed unsuitable to the occasion; but, to the spirit of Grey, my heart would appear in mourning: yet even that could not be requisite, for he was removed to a state of sainted bliss. I might mourn justly for his flock, to whom he had been a true shepherd; but for him I should rejoice. Dwelling on his general virtues, and recalling to mind his particular goodness to myself, I approached with double speed. As the bier entered the western door of the church, I was near enough to distinguish the faces of my friends; and, as I neither saw Fanny nor the Cowfells, I imagined they had already gone in. I flew to the small door that opened into the south aisle: I there overtook a lad who knew me well; but, instead of replying to my question respecting the person whose funeral it was, he stared at me  
with

with surprise, and ran away to another door. His conduct alarmed me. I entered the church trembling. Grey himself was in the reading-desk. My heart now palpitated violently : my eyes sought Fanny every where ; the people, crowding the pews, gazed at me with consternation. I saw Cowfel, his son, and daughter, standing on one side of the body, and Mrs. Grey with two ladies on the other ; but I could see Fanny nowhere. The most horrid thought that could arise now took possession of my brain. I forced my way to the bier : ‘ Where,’ cried I, seizing Cowfel by the arm, ‘ where is Fanny ? ’ He turned from me without a reply ; and at that moment I heard Grey’s voice raised to pronounce emphatically : *Thou hast set our misdeeds before thee ; and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.* It spoke the truth to my frantic soul ; and,

at



at the same instant, I cast my eyes on the plate of the coffin, which answered my inquiry; it answered me—*Here she is; you shall behold her no more!* I remember that I grasped the coffin in my arms; I remember that I again heard the thunder of Grey's voice cry, 'Take that madman away:' I remember no more."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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